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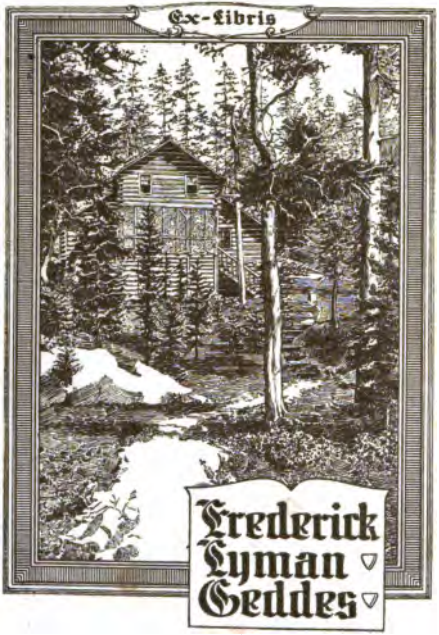
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THE

GOOD NATURED MAN.

A

COMEDY,

By Dr. GOLDSMITH.

ADAPTED FOR

THEATRICAL REPRESENTATION,

AS PERFORMED AT THE

THEATRES-ROYAL,

DRURY-LANE AND COVENT-GARDEN.

REGULATED FROM THE PROMPT-BOOKS,

By Permission of the Managers.

"The Lines distinguished by inverted Commas, are omitted in the Representation."

LONDON:

Printed for the Proprietors, under the Direction of

JOHN BELL, British-Library, STRAND,

Bookseller to his Royal Highness the PRINCE of WALES.

M DCC XCII.

Gift
Geddes Family
4-30-32

PREFACE.

When I undertook to write a comedy, I confess I was strongly prepossessed in favour of the poets of the last age, and strove to imitate them. The term, *genteel comedy*, was then unknown amongst us, and little more was desired by an audience, than nature and humour, in whatever walks of life they were most conspicuous. The author of the following scenes never imagined that more would be expected of him, and therefore to delineate character has been his principal aim. Those who know any thing of composition, are sensible, that in pursuing humour, it will sometimes lead us into the recesses of the mean; I was even tempted to look for it in the master of a spunging-house: but in deference to the public taste, grown of late, perhaps, too delicate; the scene of the bailiffs was retrenched in the representation. In deference also to the judgment of a few friends, who think in a particular way, the scene is here restored. The author submits it to the reader in his closet; and hopes that too much refinement will not banish humour and character from ours, as it has already done from the French theatre. Indeed the French comedy is now become so very elevated and sentimental, that it has not only banished humour and *Moliere* from the stage, but it has banished all spectators too.

Upon the whole, the Author returns his thanks to the public for the favourable reception which The Good Natured Man has met with: and to Mr. Colman in particular, for his kindness to it. It may not also be improper to assure any, who shall hereafter write for the theatre, that merit, or supposed merit, will ever be a sufficient passport to his protection.

THE GOOD NATURED MAN.

THIS Comedy, which was, like the RIVALS, nearly driven from the Stage at its first representation, is a very strong proof of rich comic talents in the late Dr. GOLDSMITH, from which a good taste in the age might have elicited humour that would have *lived*;—but KELLY had flattered it up to a pitch of *False Delicacy*, from whose nauseous fastidiousness it could not descend to welcome the just delineations of varied life.

Upon this play two authors have built similar character and incident—CROAKER certainly suggested old RUEFUL, and the scene wherein CROAKER brings his son LEONTINE to court Miss RICHLAND, clearly gave Mr. SHERIDAN the example to bring on Sir ANTHONY ABSOLUTE and *his* son to address LYDIA LANGUISH. The reception of GOLDSMITH's play was a striking lesson, however, to the modern CONGREVE, who, in compliance with the sentiment that was in vogue, adorned the RIVALS with those exquisite scenes of polite passion between FALKLAND and JULIA, which we know the Stage cannot equal.

Disclaiming the refinement of the moderns, GOLDSMITH, however, has here produced a fine, strong, diverting play, to which JOHNSON contributed an excellent Prologue, wherein the election sentiments of one of his political pamphlets are very neatly versified.

PROLOGUE.

WRITTEN BY DR. JOHNSON.

Spoken by Mr. BENSLEY.

PREST by the load of life, the weary mind
Surveys the general toil of human kind;
With cool submission joins the labouring train,
And social sorrow loses half its pain:
Our anxious Bard, without complaint, may share
This bustling season's epidemic care.
Like Cæsar's pilot, dignify'd by fate,
Tost in one common storm with all the great;
Distrest alike, the statesman and the wit,
When one a borough courts, and one the pit.
The busy candidates for power and fame,
Have hopes, and fears, and wishes, just the same;
Disabled both to combat, or to fly,
Must hear all taunts, and hear without reply.
Uncheck'd on both, loud rabbles vent their rage,
As mongrels bay the lion in a cage.
Th' offended burgess hoards his angry tale,
For that blest year when all that vote may rail;
Their schemes of spite the poet's foes dismiss,
Till that glad night, when all that hate may hiss.
This day the powder'd curls and golden coat,
Says swelling Crispin, begg'd a cobler's vote.

This night, our wit, the pert apprentice cries,
Lies at my feet, I hiss him, and he dies.
The great, 'tis true, can charm th' electing tribe;
The bard may supplicate, but cannot bribe.
Yet judg'd by those, whose voices ne'er were sold,
He feels no want of ill-persuading gold;
But confident of praise, if praise be due,
Trusts without fear, to merit, and to you.

Dramatis Personæ.

COVENT-GARDEN.

Men.

Mr. HONEYWOOD,	Mr. Farren.
CROAKER,	Mr. Edwin.
LOFTY,	Mr. Lewis.
Sir WILLIAM HONEYWOOD,	Mr. Hull.
LEONTINE,	Mr. Macready.
JARVIS,	Mr. Fearon.
Butler,	Mr. Blanchard.
Bailiff,	Mr. Ryder.
DUBARDIEU,	Mr. Wewitzer.
Postboy,	Mr. Rock.

Women.

Miss RICHLAND,	Mrs. Merry.
OLIVIA,	Mrs. Inchbald.
Mrs. CROAKER,	Mrs. Webb.
GARNET,	Mrs. Rock.
Landlady,	Mrs. Platt.

SCENE, *London.*

THE GOOD NATURED MAN.

ACT I. SCENE I.

An Apartment in Young HONEYWOOD'*s House. Enter Sir* WILLIAM HONEYWOOD *and* JARVIS.

Sir William.

GOOD Jarvis, make no apologies for this honest bluntness. Fidelity, like yours, is the best excuse for every freedom.

Jar. I can't help being blunt, and being very angry too, when I hear you talk of disinheriting so good, so worthy a young gentleman as your nephew, my master. All the world loves him.

Sir Will. Say rather, that he loves all the world; that is his fault.

Jar. I'm sure there is no part of it more dear to him than you are, tho' he has not seen you since he was a child.

Sir Will. What signifies his affection to me, or how can I be proud of a place in a heart where every sharper and coxcomb find an easy entrance?

Jar. I grant you that he's rather too good natur'd; that he's too much every man's man; that he laughs this minute with one, and cries the next with another; but whose instructions may he thank for all this?

Sir Will. Not mine, sure? My letters to him during my employment in Italy, taught him only that philosophy which might prevent, not defend his errors.

Jar. Faith, begging your honour's pardon, I'm sorry they taught him any philosophy at all; it has only serv'd to spoil him. This same philosophy is a good horse in the stable, but an errant jade on a journey. For my own part, whenever I hear him mention the name on't, I'm always sure he's going to play the fool.

Sir Will. Don't let us ascribe his faults to his philosophy, I entreat you. No, Jarvis, his good nature arises rather from his fears of offending the importunate, than his desire of making the deserving happy.

Jar. What it rises from, I don't know. But, to be sure, every body has it, that asks it.

Sir Will. Ay, or that does not ask it. I have been now for some time a concealed spectator of his follies, and find them as boundless as his dissipation.

Jar. And yet, faith, he has some fine name or other for them all. He calls his extravagance, generosity; and his trusting every body, universal benevolence. It was but last week he went security for a fellow whose face he scarce knew, and that he call'd an act

of exalted mu—mu—munificence; ay, that was the name he gave it.

Sir Will. And upon that I proceed, as my last effort, tho' with very little hopes to reclaim him. That very fellow has just absconded, and I have taken up the security. Now, my intention is to involve him in fictitious distress, before he has plunged himself into real calamity. To arrest him for that very debt, to clap an officer upon him, and then let him see which of his friends will come to his relief.

Jar. Well, if I could but any way see him thoroughly vexed, every groan of his would be music to me; yet faith, I believe it impossible. I have tried to fret him myself every morning these three years; but, instead of being angry, he sits as calmly to hear me scold, as he does to his hair-dresser.

Sir Will. We must try him once more, however, and I'll go this instant to put my scheme into execution; and I don't despair of succeeding, as, by your means, I can have frequent opportunities of being about him, without being known. What a pity it is, Jarvis, that any man's good will to others should produce so much neglect of himself, as to require correction. Yet, we must touch his weaknesses with a delicate hand. There are some faults so nearly allied to excellence, that we can scarce weed out the vice without eradicating the virtue. [*Exit.*

Jar. Well, go thy ways, Sir William Honeywood. It is not without reason that the world allows thee to be the best of men. But here comes his hopeful ne-

phew; the strange good natur'd, foolish, open hearted—And yet, all his faults are such that one loves him still the better for them.

Enter HONEYWOOD.

Hon. Well, Jarvis, what messages from my friends this morning?

Jar. You have no friends.

Hon. Well; from my acquaintance then?

Jar. [*Pulling out bills.*] A few of our usual cards of compliment, that's all. This bill from your taylor; this from your mercer; and this from the little broker in Crooked-lane. He says he has been at a great deal of trouble to get back the money you borrowed.

Hon. That I don't know; but I'm sure we were at a great deal of trouble in getting him to lend it.

Jar. He has lost all patience.

Hon. Then he has lost a very good thing.

Jar. There's that ten guineas you were sending to the poor gentleman and his children in the Fleet. I believe that would stop his mouth, for a while at least.

Hon. Ay, Jarvis, but what will fill their mouths in the mean time? Must I be cruel because he happens to be importunate; and, to relieve his avarice, leave them to insupportable distress?

Jar. 'Sdeath! sir, the question now is how to relieve yourself. Yourself—hav'nt I reason to be out of my senses, when I see things going at sixes and sevens?

Hon. Whatever reason you may have for being out of your senses, I hope you'll allow that I'm not quite unreasonable for continuing in mine.

Jar. You're the only man alive in your present situation that could do so—Every thing upon the waste. There's Miss Richland and her fine fortune gone already, and upon the point of being given to your rival.

Hon. I'm no man's rival.

Jar. Your uncle in Italy preparing to disinherit you; your own fortune almost spent; and nothing but pressing creditors, false friends, and a pack of drunken servants that your kindness has made unfit for any other family.

Hon. Then they have the more occasion for being in mine.

Jar. Soh! What will you have done with him that I caught stealing your plate in the pantry? In the fact; I caught him in the fact.

Hon. In the fact! If so, I really think that we should pay him his wages, and turn him off.

Jar. He shall be turn'd off at Tyburn, the dog; we'll hang him, if it be only to frighten the rest of the family.

Hon. No, Jarvis: it's enough that we have lost what he has stolen, let us not add to it the loss of a fellow creature!

Jar. Very fine; well, here was the footman just now, to complain of the butler; he says he does most work, and ought to have most wages.

Hon. That's but just; tho' perhaps here comes the butler to complain of the footman.

Jar. Ay, it's the way with them all, from the scullion to the privy-counsellor. If they have a bad master they keep quarrelling with him; if they have a good master, they keep quarrelling with one another.

Enter Butler, *drunk.*

But. Sir, I'll not stay in the family with Jonathan; you must part with him, or part with me, that's the ex—ex—exposition of the matter, sir.

Hon. Full and explicit enough.——But what's his fault, good Philip?

But. Sir, he's given to drinking, sir, and I shall have my morals corrupted, by keeping such company.

Hon. Ha, ha! he has such a diverting way——

Jar. O, quite amusing.

But. I find my wines a going, sir; and liquors don't go without mouths, sir; I hate a drunkard, sir.

Hon. Well, well, Philip, I'll hear you upon that another time, so go to bed now.

Jar. To bed! Let him go to the devil.

But. Begging your honour's pardon, and begging your pardon, master Jarvis, I'll not go to bed, nor to the devil neither. I have enough to do to mind my cellar. I forgot, your honour, Mr. Croaker is below. I came on purpose to tell you.

Hon. Why didn't you shew him up, blockhead?

But. Shew him up, sir? With all my heart, sir. Up or down, all's one to me. [*Exit.*

Jar. Ay, we have one or other of that family in this house from morning till night. He comes on the old affair, I suppose. The match between his son, that's just returned from Paris, and Miss Richland, the young lady he's guardian to.

Hon. Perhaps so. Mr. Croaker, knowing my friendship for the young lady, has got it into his head, that I can persuade her to what I please.

Jar. Ah! if you lov'd yourself but half as well as she loves you, we should soon see a marriage that would set all things to rights again.

Hon. Love me! Sure, Jarvis, you dream. No, no; her intimacy with me never amounted to more than friendship—mere friendship. That she is the most lovely woman that ever warm'd the human heart with desire, I own. But never let me harbour a thought of making her unhappy, by a connection with one so unworthy her merits as I am. No, Jarvis, it shall be my study to serve her, even in spite of my wishes; and to secure her happiness, tho' it destroys my own.

Jar. Was ever the like! I want patience.

Hon. Besides, Jarvis, tho' I could obtain Miss Richland's consent, do you think I could succeed with her guardian, or Mrs. Croaker his wife; who, tho' both very fine in their way, are yet a little opposite in their dispositions, you know.

Jar. Opposite enough, Heaven knows; the very

reverse of each other; she all laugh and no joke; he always complaining, and never sorrowful; a fretful poor soul that has a new distress for every hour in the four and twenty——

Hon. Hush, hush, he's coming up, he'll hear you.

Jar. One whose voice is a passing bell——

Hon. Well, well, go, do.

Jar. A raven that bodes nothing but mischief; a coffin and cross bones; a bundle of rue; a sprig of deadly night shade; a—[Honeywood *stopping his mouth at last, pushes him off.* [*Exit* Jarvis.

Hon. I must own my old monitor is not entirely wrong. There is something in my friend Croaker's conversation that quite depresses me. His very mirth is an antidote to all gaiety, and his appearance has a stronger effect on my spirits than an undertaker's shop.———Mr. Croaker, this is such a satisfaction———

Enter CROAKER.

Croak. A pleasant morning to Mr. Honeywood, and many of them.——How is this!——You look most shockingly to day, my dear friend. I hope this weather does not affect your spirits. To be sure, if this weather continues——I say nothing——But God send we be all better this day three months.

Hon. I heartily concur in the wish, tho' I own not in your apprehensions.

Croak. May be not! Indeed what signifies what weather we have in a country going to ruin like

ours? Taxes rising, and trade falling. Money flying out of the kingdom, and Jesuits swarming into it. I know at this time no less than an hundred and twenty-seven Jesuits between Charing-Cross and Temple-Bar.

Hon. The Jesuits will scarce pervert you or me, I should hope.

Croak. May be not. Indeed what signifies whom they pervert in a country that has scarce any religion to lose? I am only afraid for our wives and daughters.

Hon. I have no apprehensions for the ladies, I assure you.

Croak. May be not. Indeed, what signifies whether they be perverted or no? The women in my time were good for something. I have seen a lady drest from top to toe in her own manufactures formerly. But now-a-days the devil a thing of their own manufactures about them, except their faces.

Hon. But, however these faults may be practised abroad, you don't find them at home, either with Mrs. Croaker, Olivia, or Miss Richland.

Croak. The best of them will never be canoniz'd for a saint when she's dead.——By the bye, my dear friend, I don't find this match between Miss Richland and my son much relish'd, either by one side or t'other.

Hon. I thought otherwise.

Croak. Ah, Mr. Honeywood, a little of your fine serious advice to the young lady might go far: I

know she has a very exalted opinion of your understanding.

Hon. But would not that be usurping an authority that more properly belongs to yourself.

Croak. My dear friend, you know but little of my authority at home. People think, indeed, because they see me come out in a morning thus, with a pleasant face, and to make my friends merry, that all's well within. But I have cares that would break a heart of stone. My wife has so encroach'd upon every one of my privileges, that I am now no more than a mere lodger in my own house.

Hon. But a little spirit exerted on your side might perhaps restore your authority.

Croak. No, tho' I had the spirit of a lion! I do rouse sometimes. But what then! Always haggling and haggling. A man is tired of getting the better before his wife is tired of losing the victory.

Hon. It's a melancholy consideration indeed, that our chief comforts often produce our greatest anxieties, and that an increase of our possessions is but an inlet to new disquietudes.

Croak. Ah, my dear friend, these were the very words of poor Dick Doleful to me not a week before he made away with himself ——Indeed, Mr. Honeywood, I never see you but you put me in mind of poor—Dick. Ah, there was merit neglected for you! and so true a friend; we lov'd each other for thirty years, and yet he never asked me to lend him a single farthing.

Hon. Pray what could induce him to commit so rash an action at last?

Croak. I don't know, some people were malicious enough to say it was keeping company with me; because we us'd to meet now and then and open our hearts to each other. To be sure I lov'd to hear him talk, and he lov'd to hear me talk; poor dear Dick. He us'd to say that Croaker rhim'd to joker; and so we us'd to laugh—Poor Dick. [*Going to cry.*

Hon. His fate affects me.

Croak. Ay, he grew sick of this miserable life, where we do nothing but eat and grow hungry, dress and undress, get up and lie down; while reason, that should watch like a nurse by our side, falls as fast asleep as we do.

Hon. To say truth, if we compare that part of life which is to come, by that which we have past, the prospect is hideous.

Croak. Life at the greatest and best is but a froward child, that must be humour'd and coax'd a little till it falls asleep, and then all the care is over.

Hon. Very true, sir, nothing can exceed the vanity of our existence, but the folly of our pursuits. We wept when we came into the world, and every day tells us why.

Croak. Ah, my dear friend, it is a perfect satisfaction to be miserable with you. My son Leontine sha'n't lose the benefit of such fine conversation. I'll just step home for him. I am willing to shew him so much seriousness in one scarce older than himself——And

what if I bring my last letter to the Gazetteer on the increase and progress of earthquakes? It will amuse us I promise you. I there prove how the late earthquake is coming round to pay us another visit from London to Lisbon, from Lisbon to the Canary Islands, from the Canary Islands to Palmyra, from Palmyra to Constantinople, and so from Constantinople back to London again. [*Exit.*

Hon. Poor Croaker! His situation deserves the utmost pity. I shall scarce recover my spirits these three days. Sure to live upon such terms is worse than death itself. And yet, when I consider my own situation, a broken fortune, an hopeless passion, friends in distress; the wish but not the power to serve them——— [*Pausing and sighing.*

Enter Butler.

But. More company below, sir; Mrs. Croaker and Miss Richland; shall I shew them up? But they're shewing up themselves? [*Exit.*

Enter Mrs. CROAKER *and Miss* RICHLAND.

Miss Rich. You're always in such spirits.

Mrs. Croak. We have just come, my dear Honeywood, from the auction.——There was the old deaf dowager, as usual, bidding like a fury against herself.——And then so curious in antiques! herself the most genuine piece of antiquity in the whole collection.

Hon. Excuse me, ladies, if some uneasiness from

friendship makes me unfit to share in this good humour: I know you'll pardon me.

Mrs. Croak. I vow he seems as melancholy as if he had taken a dose of my husband this morning. Well, if Richland here can pardon you, I must.

Miss Rich. You would seem to insinuate, madam, that I have particular reasons for being dispos'd to refuse it.

Mrs. Croak. Whatever I insinuate, my dear, don't be so ready to wish an explanation.

Miss Rich. I own I should be sorry, Mr. Honeywood's long friendship and mine should be misunderstood.

Hon. There's no answering for others, madam. But I hope you'll never find me presuming to offer more than the most delicate friendship may readily allow.

Miss Rich. And I shall be prouder of such a tribute from you than the most passionate professions from others.

Hon. My own sentiments, madam: friendship is a disinterested commerce between equals; love, an abject intercourse between tyrants and slaves.

Miss Rich. And, without a compliment, I know none more disinterested or more capable of friendship than Mr. Honeywood.

Mrs. Croak. And indeed I know nobody that has more friends, at least among the ladies. Miss Fruzz, Miss Odbody, and Miss Winterbottom, praise him in

all companies. As for Miss Biddy Bundle, she's his professed admirer.

Miss Rich. Indeed! an admirer! I did not know, sir, you were such a favourite there. But is she seriously so handsome? Is she the mighty thing talk'd of?

Hon. The town, madam, seldom begins to praise a lady's beauty till she's beginning to lose it.

[*Smiling.*

Mrs. Croak. But she's resolved never to lose it, it seems. For as her natural face decays, her skill improves in making the artificial one. Well, nothing diverts me more than one of those fine old dressy things, who thinks to conceal her age, by every where exposing her person; sticking herself up in the front of a side-box; trailing thro' a minuet at Almack's; and then, in the public gardens; looking for all the world like one of the painted ruins of the place.

Hon. Every age has its admirers, ladies. While you, perhaps, are trading among the warmer climates of youth, there ought to be some to carry on an useful commerce in the frozen latitudes beyond fifty.

Miss Rich. But then the mortifications they must suffer before they can be fitted out for traffic. I have seen one of them fret an whole morning at her hair-dresser, when all the fault was her face.

Hon. And yet I'll engage has carried that face at last to a very good market. This good natur'd town,

madam, has husbands, like spectacles, to fit every age, from fifteen to fourscore.

Mrs. Croak. Well, you're a dear good-natur'd creature. But you know you're engaged with us this morning upon a strolling party. I want to shew Olivia the town, and the things; I believe I shall have business for you for the whole day.

Hon. I am sorry, madam, I have an appointment with Mr. Croaker, which it is impossible to put off.

Mrs. Croak. What! with my husband! Then I'm resolved to take no refusal. Nay, I protest you must. You know I never laugh so much as with you.

Hon. Why, if I must, I must. I'll swear you have put me into such spirits. Well, do you find jest, and I'll find laugh, I promise you. We'll wait for the chariot in the next room. [*Exeunt.*

Enter LEONTINE *and* OLIVIA.

Leont. There they go, thoughtless and happy: my dearest Olivia, what would I give to see you capable of sharing in their amusements, and as cheerful as they are.

Oliv. How, my Leontine, how can I be cheerful, when I have so many terrors to oppress me? The fear of being detected by this family, and the apprehensions of a censuring world when I must be detected———

Leont. The world! my love, what can it say? At worst it can only say that, being compelled by a mercenary guardian to embrace a life you disliked, you

formed a resolution of flying with the man of your choice; that you confided in his honour, and took refuge in my father's house; the only one where yours could remain without censure.

Oliv. But consider, Leontine, your disobedience and my indiscretion: your being sent to France to bring home a sister; and, instead of a sister, bringing home———

Leont. One dearer than a thousand sisters. One that I am convinc'd will be equally dear to the rest of the family, when she comes to be known.

Oliv. And that, I fear, will shortly be.

Leont. Impossible, 'till we ourselves think proper to make the discovery. My sister, you know, has been with her aunt, at Lyons, since she was a child, and you find every creature in the family takes you for her.

Oliv. But mayn't she write, mayn't her aunt write?

Leont. Her aunt scarce ever writes, and all my sister's letters are directed to me.

Oliv. But won't your refusing Miss Richland, for whom you know the old gentleman intends you, create a suspicion?

Leont. There, there's my master-stroke. I have resolved not to refuse her; nay, an hour hence I have consented to go with my father to make her an offer of my heart and fortune.

Oliv. Your heart and fortune!

Leont Don't be alarm'd, my dearest. Can Olivia think so meanly of my honour, or my love, as to

suppose I could ever hope for happiness from any but her? No, my Olivia, neither the force, nor, permit me to add, the delicacy of my passion, leave any room to suspect me. I only offer Miss Richland an heart I am convinc'd she will refuse; as I am confident that, without knowing it, her affections are fixed upon Mr. Honeywood.

Oliv. Mr. Honeywood! You'll excuse my apprehensions; but when your merits come to be put in the balance——

Leont. You view them with too much partiality. However, by making this offer, I shew a seeming compliance with my father's commands; and perhaps, upon her refusal, I may have his consent to choose for myself.

Oliv. Well, I submit. And yet, my Leontine, I own I shall envy her even your pretended addresses. I consider every look, every expression of your esteem, as due only to me. This is folly, perhaps: I allow it; but it is natural to suppose that merit, which has made an impression on ones own heart, may be powerful over that of another.

Leont. Don't, my life's treasure, don't let us make imaginary evils, when you know we have so many real ones to encounter. At worst, you know, if Miss Richland should consent, or my father refuse his pardon, it can but end in a trip to Scotland; and———

Enter CROAKER.

Croak. Where have you been, boy? I have been

seeking you. My friend Honeywood here has been saying such comfortable things. Ah! he's an example indeed. Where is he? I left him here.

Leont. Sir, I believe you may see him, and hear him too in the next room: he's preparing to go out with the ladies.

Croak. Good gracious, can I believe my eyes or my ears! I'm struck dumb with his vivacity, and stunn'd with the loudness of his laugh. Was there ever such a transformation! [*A laugh behind the scenes,* Croaker *mimics it.*] Ha, ha, ha! there it goes: a plague take their balderdash; yet I could expect nothing less, when my precious wife was of the party. On my conscience, I believe she could spread an horse-laugh thro' the pews of a tabernacle.

Leont. Since you find so many objections to a wife, sir, how can you be so earnest in recommending one to me?

Croak. I have told you, and tell you again, boy, that Miss Richland's fortune must not go out of the family; one may find comfort in the money, whatever one does in the wife.

Leont. But, sir, tho' in obedience to your desire I am ready to marry her, it may be possible she has no inclination to me.

Croak. I'll tell you once for all how it stands. A good part of Miss Richland's large fortune consists in a claim upon government, which my good friend, Mr. Lofty, assures me the treasury will allow. One half of this she is to forfeit, by her father's will, in

case she refuses to marry you. So, if she rejects you, we seize half her fortune; if she accepts you, we seize the whole, and a fine girl into the bargain.

Leont. But, sir, if you will but listen to reason——

Croak. Come, then, produce your reasons. I tell you I'm fix'd, determined, so now produce your reasons. When I'm determined, I always listen to reason, because it can then do no harm.

Leont. You have alledged that a mutual choice was the first requisite in matrimonial happiness.

Croak. Well, and you have both of you a mutual choice. She has her choice—to marry you, or lose half her fortune; and you have your choice—to marry her, or pack out of doors without any fortune at all.

Leont. An only son, sir, might expect more indulgence.

Croak. An only father, sir, might expect more obedience; besides, has not your sister here, that never disobliged me in her life, as good a right as you? He's a sad dog, Livy, my dear, and would take all from you. But he sha'n't, I tell you he sha'n't, for you shall have your share.

Oliv. Dear sir, I wish you'd be convinced that I can never be happy in any addition to my fortune which is taken from his.

Croak. Well, well, 'tis a good child, to say no more; but come with me, and we shall see something that will give us a great deal of pleasure, I promise you; old Ruggins, the curry-comb-maker, lying in state; I'm told he makes a very handsome

corpse, and becomes his coffin prodigiously. He was an intimate friend of mine, and these are friendly things we ought to do for each other. [*Exeunt.*

ACT II. SCENE I.

CROAKER's *House.* *Enter Miss* RICHLAND *and* GARNET.

Miss Richland.

OLIVIA not his sister? Olivia not Leontine's sister? You amaze me!

Garnet. No more his sister than I am; I had it all from his own servant; I can get any thing from that quarter.

Miss Rich. But how? Tell me again, Garnet.

Garnet. Why, madam, as I told you before, instead of going to Lyons to bring home his sister, who has been there with her aunt these ten years, he never went further than Paris; there he saw, and fell in love with this young lady; by the bye, of a prodigious family.

Miss Rich. And brought her home to my guardian, as his daughter?

Garnet. Yes, and daughter she will be. If he don't consent to their marriage, they talk of trying what a Scotch parson can do.

Miss Rich. Well, I own they have deceived me—And so demurely as Olivia carried it too!—Would

you believe it, Garnet, I told her all my secrets; and yet the sly cheat concealed all this from me?

Garnet. And, upon my word, madam, I don't much blame her; she was loth to trust one with her secrets that was so very bad at keeping her own.

Miss Rich. But, to add to their deceit, the young gentleman, it seems, pretends to make me serious proposals. My guardian and he are to be here presently to open the affair in form. You know I am to lose half my fortune if I refuse him.

Garnet. Yet, what can you do? For being, as you are, in love with Mr. Honeywood, madam——

Miss Rich. How! idiot; what do you mean? In love with Mr. Honeywood! Is this to provoke me?

Garnet. That is, madam, in friendship with him; I meant nothing more than friendship, as I hope to be married; nothing more.

Miss Rich. Well, no more of this! As to my guardian, and his son, they shall find me prepared to receive them; I'm resolved to accept their proposal with seeming pleasure, to mortify them by compliance, and so throw the refusal at last upon them.

Garnet. Delicious! and that will secure your whole fortune to yourself. Well, who could have thought so innocent a face could cover so much cuteness!

Miss Rich. Why, girl, I only oppose my prudence to their cunning, and practise a lesson they have taught me against themselves.

Garnet. Then you're likely not long to want em-

ployment, for here they come, and in close conference.

Enter CROAKER *and* LEONTINE.

Leont. Excuse me, sir, if I seem to hesitate upon the point of putting the lady so important a question.

Croak. Lord! good sir, moderate your fears; you're so plaguy shy, that one would think you had changed sexes. I tell you we must have the half or the whole. Come, let me see with what spirit you begin? Well, why don't you? Eh! What? Well then—I must, it seems—Miss Richland, my dear, I believe you guess at our business; an affair which my son here comes to open, that nearly concerns your happiness.

Miss Rich. Sir, I should be ungrateful not to be pleased with any thing that comes recommended by you.

Croak. How, boy, could you desire a finer opening? Why don't you begin, I say? [*To* Leont.

Leont. 'Tis true, madam; my father, madam, has some intentions—hem—of explaining an affair—— which—himself—can best explain, madam.

Croak. Yes, my dear; it comes entirely from my son; it's all a request of his own, madam. And I will permit him to make the best of it.

Leont. The whole affair is only this, madam; my father has a proposal to make, which he insists none but himself shall deliver.

Croak. My mind misgives me, the fellow will never be brought on [*Aside.*] In short, madam, you see before you one that loves you; one whose whole happiness is all in you.

Miss Rich. I never had any doubts of your regard, sir; and I hope you can have none of my duty.

Croak. That's not the thing, my little sweeting; my love! No, no, another guess lover than I; there he stands, madam; his very looks declare the force of his passion—Call up a look, you dog—But then, had you seen him, as I have, weeping, speaking soliloquies and blank verse, sometimes melancholy, and sometimes absent—

Miss Rich. I fear, sir, he's absent now; or such a declaration would have come more properly from himself.

Croak. Himself! madam; he would die before he could make such a confession; and if he had not a channel for his passion thro' me, it would ere now have drowned his understanding.

Miss Rich. I must grant, sir, there are attractions in modest diffidence, above the force of words. A silent address is the genuine eloquence of sincerity.

Croak. Madam, he has forgot to speak any other language; silence is become his mother tongue.

Miss Rich. And it must be confessed, sir, it speaks very powerfully in his favour. And yet, I shall be thought too forward in making such a confession; sha'n't I, Mr. Leontine?

Leont. Confusion! my reserve will undo me. But,

if modesty attracts her, impudence may disgust her. I'll try. [*Aside.*] Don't imagine from my silence, madam, that I want a due sense of the honour and happiness intended me. My father, madam, tells me, your humble servant is not totally indifferent to you. He admires you; I adore you; and when we come together, upon my soul I believe we shall be the happiest couple in all St. James's.

Miss Rich. If I could flatter myself, you thought as you speak, sir——

Leont. Doubt my sincerity, madam? By your dear self I swear. Ask the brave if they desire glory; ask cowards if they covet safety——

Croak. Well, well, no more questions about it.

Leont. Ask the sick if they long for health, ask misers if they love money, ask——

Croak. Ask a fool if he can talk nonsense! What's come over the boy? What signifies asking, when there's not a soul to give you an answer? If you would ask to the purpose, ask this lady's consent to make you happy,

Miss Rich. Why indeed, sir, his uncommon ardour almost compels me, forces me, to comply. And yet I'm afraid he'll despise a conquest gain'd with too much ease; won't you, Mr. Leontine?

Leont. Confusion! [*Aside.*] O by no means, madam, by no means. And yet, madam, you talked of force. There is nothing I would avoid so much as compulsion in a thing of this kind. No, madam, I will still be generous, and leave you at liberty to refuse.

Croak. But I tell you, sir, the lady is not at liberty. It's a match. You see she says nothing. Silence gives consent.

Leont. But, sir, she talk'd of force. Consider, sir, the cruelty of constraining her inclinations.

Croak. But I say there's no cruelty. Don't you know, blockhead, that girls have always a round-about way of saying yes before company? So get you both gone together into the next room, and hang him that interrupts the tender explanation. Get you gone, I say; I'll not hear a word.

Leont. But, sir, I must beg leave to insist—

Croak. Get off, you puppy, or I'll beg leave to insist upon knocking you down. Stupid whelp. But I don't wonder, the boy takes entirely after his mother. [*Exeunt Miss* Rich *and* Leont.

Enter Mrs. CROAKER.

Mrs. Croak. Mr. Croaker, I bring you something, my dear, that I believe will make you smile.

Croak. I'll hold you a guinea of that, my dear.

Mrs. Croak. A letter; and, as I knew the hand, I ventured to open it.

Croak. And how can you expect your breaking open my letters should give me pleasure?

Mrs. Croak. Poo, its from your sister at Lyons, and contains good news: read it.

Croak. What a Frenchified cover is here! That sister of mine has some good qualities, but I could never teach her to fold a letter.

Mrs. Croak. Fold a fiddlestick. Read what it contains.

Croak. [*Reading.*]

'Dear Nick,

'An English gentleman, of large fortune, has for some time made private, tho' honourable proposals to your daughter Olivia. They love each other tenderly, and I find she has consented, without letting any of the family know, to crown his addresses. As such good offers don't come every day, your own good sense, his large fortune, and family considerations, will induce you to forgive her.

'Yours ever,

'RACHEL CROAKER.'

My daughter Olivia privately contracted to a man of large fortune! This is good news indeed.—My heart never foretold me of this. And yet, how slily the little baggage has carried it since she came home. Not a word on't to the old ones for the world. Yet, I thought, I saw something she wanted to conceal.

Mrs. Croak. Well, if they have concealed their amour, they sha'n't conceal their wedding; that shall be public, I'm resolved.

Croak. I tell thee, woman, the wedding is the most foolish part of the ceremony. I can never get this woman to think of the most serious part of the nuptial engagement.

Mrs. Croak. What, would you have me think of their funeral? But come, tell me, my dear, don't you

owe more to me than you care to confess? Would you have ever been known to Mr. Lofty, who has undertaken Miss Richland's claim at the Treasury, but for me? who was it first made him an acquaintance at Lady Shabbaroon's rout? Who got him to promise us his interest? Is not he a back-stairs favourite, one that can do what he pleases with those that do what they please? Isn't he an acquaintance that all your groaning and lamentations could never have got us?

Croak. He is a man of importance, I grant you. And yet, what amazes me is, that while he is giving away places to all the world, he can't get one for himself.

Mrs. Croak. That perhaps may be owing to his nicety. Great men are not easily satisfied.

Enter a French Servant.

Serv. An expresse from Monsieur Lofty. He vil be vait upon your honour's instrammant. He be only giving four five instruction, read two tree memorial, call upon von ambassadeur. He vil be vid you in one tree minutes.

Mrs. Croak. You see now, my dear. What an extensive department! Well, friend, let your master know, that we are extremely honoured by this honour. Was there any thing ever in a higher style of breeding! All messages among the great are now done by express.

Croak. To be sure, no man does little things with

more solemnity, or claims more respect than he. But he's in the right on't. In our bad world, respect is given, where respect is claim'd.

Mrs. Croak. Never mind the world, my dear; you were never in a pleasanter place in your life. Let us now think of receiving him with proper respect; [*A loud rapping at the door.*] and there he is by the thundering rap.

Croak. Ay, verily, there he is; as close upon the heels of his own express, as an indorsement upon the back of a bill. Well, I'll leave you to receive him, whilst I go to chide my little Olivia for intending to steal a marriage without mine or her aunt's consent. I must seem to be angry, or she too may begin to despise my authority. [*Exit.*

Enter LOFTY, *speaking to his Servant.*

Lofty. And if the Venetian ambassador, or that teasing creature the marquis, should call, I'm not at home. Dam'me, I'll be pack-horse to none of them. My dear madam, I have just snatched a moment—And if the expresses to his grace be ready, let them be sent off; they're of importance. Madam, I ask a thousand pardons.

Mrs. Croak. Sir, this honour——

Lofty. And Dubardieu! if the person calls about the commission, let him know that it is made out. As for Lord Cumbercourt's stale request, it can keep cold: you understand me. Madam, I ask ten thousand pardons.

Mrs. Croak. Sir, this honour——

Lofty. And, Dubardieu! If the man comes from the Cornish borough, you must do him; you must do him, I say. Madam, I ask ten thousand pardons. And if the Russian—ambassador calls: but he will scarce call to-day, I believe. And now, madam, I have just got time to express my happiness in having the honour of being permitted to profess myself your most obedient humble servant.

Mrs. Croak. Sir, the happiness and honour are all mine; and yet, I'm only robbing the public while I detain you.

Lofty. Sink the public, madam, when the fair are to be attended. Ah, could all my hours be so charmingly devouted! Sincerely, don't you pity us poor creatures in affairs? Thus it is eternally; solicited for places here, teased for pensions there, and courted every where. I know you pity me. Yes, I see you do.

Mrs. Croak. Excuse me, sir. Toils of empires pleasures are, as Waller says.

Lofty. Waller, Waller; is he of the House?

Mrs. Croak. The modern poet of that name, sir.

Lofty. Oh, a modern! We men of business despise the moderns; and as for the ancients, we have no time to read them. Poetry is a pretty thing enough for our wives and daughters; but not for us. Why now, here I stand that know nothing of books. I say, madam, I know nothing of books; and yet, I believe, upon a land-carriage fishery, a stamp-act,

or a jaghire, I can talk my two hours without feeling the want of them.

Mrs. Croak. The world is no stranger to Mr. Lofty's eminence in every capacity.

Lofty. I vow to Gad, madam, you make me blush. I'm nothing, nothing, nothing in the world; a mere obscure gentleman. To be sure, indeed, one or two of the present ministers are pleased to represent me as a formidable man. I know they are pleased to bespatter me at all their little dirty levees. Yet, upon my soul, I wonder what they see in me to treat me so! Measures, not men, have always been my mark; and I vow by all that's honourable, my resentment has never done the men, as mere men, any manner of harm—That is, as mere men.

Mrs. Croak. What importance, and yet what modesty!

Lofty. Oh, if you talk of modesty, madam! There, I own, I'm accessible to praise: modesty is my foible. It was so, the Duke of Brentford used to say of me. I love Jack Lofty, he used to say: no man a finer knowledge of things; quite a man of information; and when he speaks upon his legs, by the lord he's prodigious, he scouts them; and yet all men have their faults; too much modesty is his, says his Grace.

Mrs. Croak. And yet, I dare say, you don't want assurance when you come to solicit for your friends.

Lofty. O, there indeed I'm in bronze. Apropos, I have just been mentioning Miss Richland's case to a certain personage; we must name no names. When

I ask, I am not to be put off, madam. No, no, I take my friend by the button. A fine girl, sir; great justice in her case—A friend of mine—Borough interest.——Business must be done, Mr. Secretary. I say, Mr. Secretary, her business must be done, sir. That's my way, madam.

Mrs. Croak. Bless me! you said all this to the Secretary of State, did you?

Lofty. I did not say the Secretary, did I? Well, curse it, since you have found me out, I will not deny it. It was to the Secretary.

Mrs. Croak. This was going to the fountain head at once, not applying to the understrappers, as Mr. Honeywood would have had us.

Lofty. Honeywood! he, he! He was indeed a fine solicitor. I suppose you have heard what has just happened to him?

Mrs. Croak. Poor dear man; no accident, I hope.

Lofty. Undone, madam, that's all. His creditors have taken him into custody. A prisoner in his own house.

Mrs. Croak. A prisoner in his own house! How! At this very time! I'm quite unhappy for him.

Lofty. Why, so am I. The man, to be sure, was immensely good natur'd. But then I could never find that he had any thing in him.

Mrs. Croak. His manner, to be sure, was excessive harmless; some, indeed, thought it a little dull. For my part, I always concealed my opinion.

Lofty. It cann't be concealed, madam; the man

was dull, dull as the last new comedy! A poor impracticable creature! I tried once or twice to know if he was fit for business; but he had scarce talents to be groom-porter to an orange barrow.

Mrs. Croak. How differently does Miss Richland think of him! for, I believe, with all his faults, she loves him.

Lofty. Loves him! Does she? You should cure her of that by all means. Let me see, what if she were sent to him this instant, in his present doleful situation? My life for it that works her cure. Distress is a perfect antidote to love. Suppose we join her in the next room? Miss Richland is a fine girl, has a fine fortune, and must not be thrown away. Upon my honour, madam, I have a regard for Miss Richland; and, rather than she should be thrown away, I should think it no indignity to marry her myself.

[*Exeunt.*

Enter OLIVIA *and* LEONTINE.

Leont. And yet, trust me, Olivia, I had every reason to expect Miss Richland's refusal, as I did every thing in my power to deserve it. Her indelicacy surprises me!

Oliv. Sure, Leontine, there's nothing so indelicate in being sensible of your merit. If so, I fear I shall be the most guilty thing alive.

Leont. But you mistake, my dear. The same attention I used to advance my merit with you, I practised to lessen it with her. What more could I do?

Oliv. Let us now rather consider what's to be done. We have both dissembled too long—I have always been asham'd—I am now quite weary of it. Sure I could never have undergone so much for any other but you.

Leont. And you shall find my gratitude equal to your kindest compliance. Tho' our friends should totally forsake us, Olivia, we can draw upon content for the deficiencies of fortune.

Oliv. Then why should we defer our scheme of humble happiness, when it is now in our power? I may be the favourite of your father, it is true; but can it ever be thought, that his present kindness to a suppos'd child, will continue to a known deceiver?

Leont. I have many reasons to believe it will. As his attachments are but few, they are lasting. His own marriage was a private one, as ours may be. Besides, I have sounded him already at a distance, and find all his answers exactly to our wish. Nay, by an expression or two that dropp'd from him, I am induced to think he knows of this affair.

Oliv. Indeed! But that would be an happiness too great to be expected.

Leont. However it be, I'm certain you have power over him; and am persuaded, if you inform'd him of our situation, that he would be disposed to pardon it.

Oliv. You had equal expectations, Leontine, from your last scheme with Miss Richland, which you find has succeeded most wretchedly.

Leont. And that's the best reason for trying another.

Oliv. If it must be so, I submit.

Leont. As we could wish, he comes this way. Now, my dearest Olivia, be resolute. I'll just retire within hearing, to come in at a proper time, either to share your danger, or confirm your victory. [*Exit.*

Enter CROAKER.

Croak. Yes, I must forgive her; and yet not too easily neither. It will be proper to keep up the decorums of resentment a little, if it be only to impress her with an idea of my authority.

Oliv. How I tremble to approach him!—Might I presume, sir—If I interrupt you——

Croak. No, child, where I have an affection it is not a little thing can interrupt me. Affections gets over little things.

Oliv. Sir, you're too kind. I'm sensible how ill I deserve this partiality. Yet Heaven knows there is nothing I would not do to gain it.

Croak. And you have but too well succeeded, you little hussy, you. With those endearing ways of yours, on my conscience, I could be brought to forgive any thing, unless it were a very great offence indeed.

Oliv. But mine is such an offence—When you know my guilt—Yes, you shall know it, tho' I feel the greatest pain in the confession.

Croak. Why then, if it be so very great a pain, you

may spare yourself the trouble, for I know every syllable of the matter before you begin.

Oliv. Indeed! Then I'm undone.

Croak. Ay, miss, you wanted to steal a match, without letting me know it, did you? But I'm not worth being consulted, I suppose, when there's to be a marriage in my own family. No, I'm to have no hand in the disposal of my own children. No, I'm nobody. I'm to be a mere article of family lumber; a piece of crack'd china to be stuck up in a corner.

Oliv. Dear sir, nothing but the dread of your authority could induce us to conceal it from you.

Croak. No, no, my consequence is no more; I'm as little minded as a dead Russian in winter, just stuck up with a pipe in his mouth till there comes a thaw—It goes to my heart to vex her.

Oliv. I was prepar'd, sir, for your anger, and despair'd of pardon, even while I presum'd to ask it. But your severity shall never abate my affection, as my punishment is but justice.

Croak. And yet you should not despair neither, Livy. We ought to hope all for the best.

Oliv. And do you permit me to hope, sir! Can I ever expect to be forgiven! But hope has too long deceiv'd me.

Croak. Why then, child, it sha'n't deceive you now, for I forgive you this very moment. I forgive you all; and now you are indeed my daughter.

Oliv. O transport! this kindness overpowers me.

Croak. I was always against severity to our children. We have been young and giddy ourselves, and we cann't expect boys and girls to be old before their time.

Oliv. What generosity! But can you forget the many falsehoods, the dissimulation———

Croak. You did indeed dissemble, you urchin, you; but where's the girl that won't dissemble for an husband! My wife and I had never been married, if we had not dissembled a little before-hand.

Oliv. It shall be my future care never to put such generosity to a second trial. And as for the partner of my offence and folly, from his native honour, and the just sense he has of his duty, I can answer for him that———

Enter LEONTINE.

Leont. Permit him thus to answer for himself. [*Kneeling.*] Thus, sir, let me speak my gratitude for this unmerited forgiveness. Yes, sir, this even exceeds all your former tenderness: I now can boast the most indulgent of fathers. The life he gave, compared to this, was but a trifling blessing.

Croak. And, good sir, who sent for you, with that fine tragedy face, and flourishing manner? I don't know what we have to do with your gratitude upon this occasion.

Leont. How, sir, is it possible to be silent when so much oblig'd! Would you refuse me the pleasure of being grateful! Of adding my thanks to my Olivia's!

Of sharing in the transports that you have thus occasion'd?

Croak. Lord, sir, we can be happy enough, without your coming in to make up the party. I don't know what's the matter with the boy all this day; he has got into such a rhodomontade manner all the morning!

Leont. But, sir, I that have so large a part in the benefit, is it not my duty to shew my joy? Is the being admitted to your favour so slight an obligation? Is the happiness of marrying my Olivia so small a blessing?

Croak. Marrying Olivia! marrying Olivia! marrying his own sister! Sure the boy is out of his senses. His own sister!

Leont. My sister!

Oliv. Sister! How have I been mistaken! [*Aside.*

Leont. Some curs'd mistake in all this, I find. [*Aside.*

Croak. What does the booby mean, or has he any meaning? Eh, what do you mean, you blockhead, you?

Leont. Mean, sir—why, sir—only when my sister is to be married, that I have the pleasure of marrying her, sir; that is, of giving her away, sir——I have made a point of it.

Croak. O, is that all. Give her away. You have made a point of it. Then you had as good make a point of first giving away yourself, as I'm going to prepare the writings between you and Miss Rich.

land this very minute. What a fuss is here about nothing! Why, what's the matter now? I thought I had made you at least as happy as you could wish.

Oliv. O! yes, sir, very happy.

Croak. Do you foresee any thing, child? You look as if you did. I think if any thing was to be foreseen, I have as sharp a look-out as another: and yet I foresee nothing. [*Exit.*

Oliv. What can it mean?

Leont. He knows something, and yet for my life I cann't tell what.

Oliv. It cann't be the connection between us, I'm pretty certain.

Leont. Whatever it be, my dearest, I'm resolv'd to put it out of fortune's power to repeat our mortification. I'll haste, and prepare for our journey to Scotland this very evening. My friend Honeywood has promis'd me his advice and assistance. I'll go to him, and repose our distresses on his friendly bosom: and I know so much of his honest heart, that if he cann't relieve our uneasinesses, he will at least share them. [*Exeunt.*

ACT III. SCENE I.

Young HONEYWOOD's *House.* Bailiff, HONEYWOOD, *and* Follower.

Bailiff.

LOOK'E, sir, I have arrested as good men as you in my time: no disparagement of you neither. Men that would go forty guineas on a game of cribbage. I challenge the town to shew a man in more genteeler practice than myself.

Hon. Without all question, Mr. ———. I forget your name, sir?

Bail. How can you forget what you never knew? He, he, he!

Hon. May I beg leave to ask your name?

Bail. Yes, you may.

Hon. Then, pray, sir, what is your name, sir?

Bail. That I didn't promise to tell you. He, he, he! A joke breaks no bones, as we say among us that practise the law.

Hon. You may have reason for keeping it a secret, perhaps.

Bail. The law does nothing without reason. I'm asham'd to tell my name to no man, sir. If you can shew cause, as why, upon a special capus, that I should prove my name———But, come, Timothy Twitch is my name. And, now you know my name, what have you to say to that?

Hon. Nothing in the world, good Mr. Twitch, but that I have a favour to ask, that's all.

Bail. Ay, favours are more easily asked than granted, as we say among us that practise the law. I have taken an oath against granting favours. Would you have me perjure myself?

Hon. But my request will come recommended in so strong a manner, as, I believe you'll have no scruple. [*Pulling out his purse.*] The thing is only this: I believe I shall be able to discharge this trifle in two or three days at farthest; but, as I would not have the affair known for the world, I have thoughts of keeping you, and your good friend here, about me till the debt is discharged; for which, I shall be properly grateful.

Bail. Oh! that's another maxum, and altogether within my oath. For certain, if an honest man is to get any thing by a thing, there's no reason why all things should not be done in civility.

Hon. Doubtless, all trades must live, Mr. Twitch; and yours is a necessary one. [*Gives him money.*

Bail. Oh! your honour; I hope your honour takes nothing amiss as I does, as I does nothing but my duty in so doing. I'm sure no man can say I ever give a gentleman that was a gentleman ill usage. If I saw that a gentleman was a gentleman, I have taken money not to see him for ten weeks together.

Hon. Tenderness is a virtue, Mr. Twitch.

Bail. Ay, sir, it's a perfect treasure. I love to see a gentleman with a tender heart. I don't know, but

I think I have a tender heart myself. If all that I have lost by my heart was put together, it would make a—but no matter for that.

Hon. Don't account it lost, Mr. Twitch. The ingratitude of the world can never deprive us of the conscious happiness of having acted with humanity ourselves.

Bail. Humanity, sir, is a jewel. It's better than gold. I love humanity. People may say, that we, in our way, have no humanity; but I'll shew you my humanity this moment. There's my follower here, little Flanigan, with a wife and four children, a guinea or two would be more to him than twice as much to another. Now, as I cann't shew him any humanity myself, I must beg leave you'll do it for me.

Hon. I assure you, Mr. Twitch, yours is a most powerful recommendation. [*Giving money to the Follower.*

Bail. Sir, you're a gentleman. I see you know what to do with your money. But, to business: we are to be with you here as your friends, I suppose. But set in case company comes.—Little Flanigan here, to be sure, has a good face; a very good face: but then he is a little seedy, as we say among us that practise the law. Not well in clothes. Smoke the pocket-holes.

Hon. Well, that shall be remedied without delay.

Enter Servant.

Serv. Sir, Miss Richland is below.

Hon. How unlucky. Detain her a moment. We

must improve, my good friend, little Mr. Flanigan's appearance first. Here, let Mr. Flanigan have a suit of my clothes—quick—the brown and silver——Do you hear?

Serv. That your honour gave away to the begging gentleman that makes verses, because it was as good as new.

Hon. The white and gold then.

Serv. That, your honour, I made bold to sell, because it was good for nothing.

Hon. Well, the first that comes to hand then. The blue and gold. I believe Mr. Flanigan will look best in blue. [*Exit* Flanigan.

Bail. Rabbit me, but little Flanigan will look well in any thing. Ah, if your honour knew that bit of flesh as well as I do, you'd be perfectly in love with him. There's not a prettier scout in the four counties after a shy-cock than he. Scents like a hound; sticks like a weasel. He was master of the ceremonies to the black queen of Morocco when I took him to follow me.

Re-enter FLANIGAN.

Heh, ecod, I think he looks so well, that I don't care if I have a suit from the same place for myself.

Hon. Well, well, I hear the lady coming. Dear Mr. Twitch, I beg you'll give your friend directions not to speak. As for yourself, I know you will say nothing without being directed.

Bail. Never you fear me, I'll shew the lady that I

have something to say for myself as well as another. One man has one way of talking, and another man has another, that's all the difference between them.

Enter Miss RICHLAND *and her Maid.*

Miss Rich. You'll be surprised, sir, with this visit. But you know I'm yet to thank you for choosing my little library.

Hon. Thanks, madam, are unnecessary, as it was I that was obliged by your commands. Chairs here. Two of my very good friends, Mr. Twitch and Mr. Flanigan. Pray, gentlemen, sit without ceremony.

Miss Rich. Who can these odd looking men be! I fear it is as I was informed. It must be so. [*Aside.*

Bail. [*After a pause.*] Pretty weather, very pretty weather for the time of the year, madam.

Fol. Very good circuit weather in the country.

Hon. You officers are generally favourites among the ladies. My friends, madam, have been upon very disagreeable duty, I assure you. The fair should, in some measure, recompence the toil of the brave.

Miss Rich. Our officers do indeed deserve every favour. The gentlemen are in the marine service, I presume, sir?

Hon. Why, madam, they do—occasionally serve in the Fleet, madam. A dangerous service.

Miss Rich. I'm told so. And I own, it has often surprised me, that, while we have had so many in-

stances of bravery there, we have had so few of wit at home to praise it.

Hon. I grant, madam, that our poets have not written as our soldiers have fought; but, they have done all they could, and Hawke or Amherst could do no more.

Miss Rich. I'm quite displeased when I see a fine subject spoiled by a dull writer.

Hon. We should not be so severe against dull writers, madam. It is ten to one, but the dullest writer exceeds the most rigid French critic who presumes to despise him.

Fol. Damn the French, the parle vous, and all that belongs to them.

Miss Rich. Sir!

Hon. Ha, ha, ha! honest Mr. Flanigan. A true English officer, madam; he's not contented with beating the French, but he will scold them too.

Miss Rich. Yet, Mr. Honeywood, this does not convince me but that severity in criticisms is necessary. It was our first adopting the severity of French taste that has brought them in turn to taste us.

Bail. Taste us! By the lord, madam, they devour us. Give Monseers but a taste, and I'll be damn'd but they come in for a belly-full.

Miss Rich. Very extraordinary this.

Fol. But very true. What makes the bread rising, the parle vous that devour us. What makes the mutton fivepence a pound, the parle vous that eat

it up. What makes the beer three-pence halfpenny a pot——

Hon. Ah! the vulgar rogues, all will be out. Right, gentlemen, very right upon my word, and quite to the purpose. They draw a parallel, madam, between the mental taste and that of our senses. We are injur'd as much by French severity in the one, as by French rapacity in the other. That's their meaning.

Miss Rich. Tho' I don't see the force of the parallel, yet I'll own that we should sometimes pardon books, as we do our friends, that have now and then agreeable absurdities to recommend them.

Bail. That's all my eye. The king only can pardon, as the law says: for set in case——

Hon. I'm quite of your opinion, sir. I see the whole drift of your argument. Yes, certainly, our presuming to pardon any work is arrogating a power that belongs to another. If all have power to condemn, what writer can be free?

Bail. By his habus corpus. His habus corpus can set him free at any time. For set in case——

Hon. I'm obliged to you, sir, for the hint. If, madam, as my friend observes, our laws are so careful of a gentleman's person, sure we ought to be equally careful of his dearer part, his fame.

Fol. Ay, but if so be a man's nabb'd, you know—

Hon. Mr. Flanigan, if you spoke for ever, you could not improve the last observation. For my own part, I think it conclusive.

Bail. As for the matter of that, mayhap——

Hon. Nay, sir, give me leave in this instance to be positive. For where is the necessity of censuring works without genius, which must shortly sink of themselves: what is it, but aiming our unnecessary blow against a victim already under the hands of justice?

Bail. Justice! O, by the elevens, if you talk about justice, I think I am at home there; for, in a course of law——

Hon. My dear Mr. Twitch, I discern what you'd be at perfectly, and I believe the lady must be sensible of the art with which it is introduced. I suppose you perceive the meaning, madam, of his course of law.

Miss Rich. I protest, sir, I do not. I perceive only that you answer one gentleman before he has finished, and the other before he has well begun.

Bail. Madam, you are a gentlewoman, and I will make the matter out. This here question is about severity and justice, and pardon, and the like of they. Now to explain the thing——

Hon. O! curse your explanations. [*Aside.*

Enter Servant.

Serv. Mr. Leontine, sir, below, desires to speak with you upon earnest business.

Hon. That's lucky. [*Aside.*] Dear madam, you'll excuse me, and my good friends here, for a few minutes. There are books, madam, to amuse you.

Come, gentlemen, you know I make no ceremony with such friends. After you, sir. Excuse me. Well, if I must. But, I know your natural politeness.

Bail. Before and behind, you know.

Fol. Ay, ay, before and behind, before and behind.

[*Exeunt* Honeywood, *Bailiff, and Follower.*

Miss Rich. What can all this mean, Garnet?

Garnet. Mean, madam! why, what should it mean, but what Mr. Lofty sent you here to see? These people he calls officers, are officers sure enough: sheriff's officers; bailiffs, madam.

Miss Rich. Ay, it is certainly so. Well, tho' his perplexities are far from giving me pleasure; yet, I own there's something very ridiculous in them, and a just punishment for his dissimulation.

Garnet. And so they are. But I wonder, madam, that the lawyer you just employed to pay his debts, and set him free, has not done it by this time. He ought at least to have been here before now. But lawyers are always more ready to get a man into troubles, than out of them.

Enter Sir WILLIAM.

Sir Will. For Miss Richland to undertake setting him free, I own, was quite unexpected. It has totally unhinged my schemes to reclaim him. Yet, it gives me pleasure to find, that, among a number of worthless friendships, he has made one acquisition of real value; for there must be some softer passion

on her side that prompts this generosity. Ha! here before me: I'll endeavour to sound her affections. Madam, as I am the person that have had some demands upon the gentleman of this house, I hope you'll excuse me, if, before I enlarged him, I wanted to see yourself.

Miss Rich. The precaution was very unnecessary, sir. I suppose your wants were only such as my agent had power to satisfy.

Sir Will. Partly, madam. But I was also willing you should be fully apprized of the character of the gentleman you intended to serve.

Miss Rich. It must come, sir, with a very ill grace from you. To censure it, after what you have done, would look like malice; and to speak favourably of a character you have oppressed, would be impeaching your own. And sure, his tenderness, his humanity, his universal friendship, may atone for many faults.

Sir Will. That friendship, madam, which is exerted in too wide a sphere, becomes totally useless. Our bounty, like a drop of water, disappears when diffused too widely. They, who pretend most to this universal benevolence, are either deceivers, or dupes: men who desire to cover their private ill-nature by a pretended regard for all; or men who, reasoning themselves into false feelings, are more earnest in pursuit of splendid than of useful virtues.

Miss Rich. I am surprised, sir, to hear one who has probably been a gainer by the folly of others, so severe in his censure of it.

Sir Will. Whatever I may have gained by folly, madam, you see I am willing to prevent your losing by it.

Miss Rich. Your cares for me, sir, are unnecessary. I always suspect those services which are denied where they are wanted, and offered, perhaps, in hopes of a refusal. No, sir, my directions have been given, and I insist upon their being complied with.

Sir Will. Thou amiable woman. I can no longer contain the expressions of my gratitude: my pleasure. You see before you one who has been equally careful of his interest: one, who has for some time been a concealed spectator of his follies, and only punished, in hopes to reclaim them—His uncle.

Miss Rich. Sir William Honeywood! You amaze me. How shall I conceal my confusion? I fear, sir, you'll think I have been too forward in my services. I confess I———

Sir Will. Don't make any apologies, madam. I only find myself unable to repay the obligation. And yet, I have been trying my interest of late to serve you. Having learnt, madam, that you had some demands upon government, I have, tho' unasked, been your solicitor there.

Miss Rich. Sir, I'm infinitely obliged to your intentions. But my guardian has employed another gentleman who assures him of success.

Sir Will. Who, the important little man that visits here! Trust me, madam, he's quite contemptible among men in power, and utterly unable to serve

Sir Will. He might have reason, perhaps. His place is pretty considerable, I'm told.

Lofty. A trifle, a mere trifle, among us men of business. The truth is, he wanted dignity to fill up a greater.

Sir Will. Dignity of person, do you mean, sir? I'm told he's much about my size and figure, sir.

Lofty. Ay, tall enough for a marching regiment; but then he wanted a something—a consequence of form—a kind of a—I believe the lady perceives my meaning.

Miss Rich. O perfectly; you courtiers can do any thing, I see.

Lofty. My dear madam, all this is but a mere exchange; we do greater things for one another every day. Why, as thus, now: let me suppose you the first lord of the treasury, you have an employment in you that I want; I have a place in me that you want; do me here, do you there; interest of both sides, few words, flat, done and done, and it's over.

Sir Will. A thought strikes me. [*Aside.*] Now you mention Sir William Honeywood, madam; and as he seems, sir, an acquaintance of yours; you'll be glad to hear he's arrived from Italy; I had it from a friend who knows him as well as he does me, and you may depend on my information.

Lofty. The devil he is! If I had known that, we should not have been quite so well acquainted. —— [*Aside.*

Sir Will. He is certainly returned; and as this gentleman is a friend of yours, he can be of signal service to us, by introducing me to him; there are some papers relative to your affairs, that require dispatch and his inspection.

Miss Rich. This gentleman, Mr. Lofty, is a person employed in my affairs: I know you'll serve us.

Lofty. My dear madam, I live but to serve you. Sir William shall even wait upon him, if you think proper to command it.

Sir Will. That would be quite unnecessary.

Lofty. Well, we must introduce you then. Call upon me—let me see—ay, in two days.

Sir Will. Now, or the opportunity will be lost for ever.

Lofty. Well, if it must be now, now let it be. But, damn it, that's unfortunate; my Lord Grig's curs'd Pensacola business comes on this very hour, and I'm engaged to attend—another time—

Sir Will. A short letter to Sir William will do.

Lofty. You shall have it; yet, in my opinion, a letter is a very bad way of going to work; face to face, that's my way.

Sir Will. The letter, sir, will do quite as well.

Lofty. Zounds, sir, do you pretend to direct me; direct me in the business of office? Do you know me, sir? Who am I?

Miss Rich. Dear Mr. Lofty, this request is not so much his as mine; if my commands—but you despise my power.

Lofty. Delicate creature! your commands could even controul a debate at midnight; to a power so constitutional, I am all obedience and tranquillity.—He shall have a letter; where is my secretary? Dubardieu? And yet, I protest I don't like this way of doing business. I think if I spoke first to Sir William—But you will have it so. [*Exit with Miss* Rich.

Sir Will. Ha, ha, ha! This too is one of my nephew's hopeful associates. O vanity, thou constant deceiver, how do all thy efforts to exalt, serve but to sink us. Thy false colourings, like those employed to heighten beauty, only seem to mend that bloom which they contribute to destroy. I'm not displeased at this interview; exposing this fellow's impudence to the contempt it deserves, may be of use to my design; at least, if he can reflect, it will be of use to himself.

Enter JARVIS.

Sir Will. How now, Jarvis, where's your master, my nephew?

Jar. At his wit's end, I believe; he's scarce gotten out of one scrape, but he's running his head into another.

Sir Will. How so?

Jar. The house has but just been cleared of the bailiffs, and now he's again engaging tooth and nail in assisting old Croaker's son to patch up a clandestine match with the young lady that passes in the house for his sister.

Sir Will. Ever busy to serve others.

Jar. Ay, any body but himself. The young couple, it seems, are just setting out for Scotland, and he supplies them with money for the journey.

Sir Will. Money! how is he able to supply others, who has scarce any for himself?

Jar. Why, there it is; he has no money, that's true; but then, as he never said no to any request in his life, he has given them a bill drawn by a friend of his upon a merchant in the city, which I am to get chang'd; for you must know that I am to go with them to Scotland myself.

Sir Will. How!

Jar. It seems the young gentleman is obliged to take a different road from his mistress, as he is to call upon an uncle of his that lives out of the way, in order to prepare a place for their reception, when they return; so they have borrowed me from my master, as the properest person to attend the young lady down.

Sir Will. To the land of matrimony! A pleasant journey, Jarvis.

Jar. Ay, but I'm only to have all the fatigues on't.

Sir Will. Well, it may be shorter, and less fatiguing, than you imagine. I know but too much of the young lady's family and connexions, whom I have seen abroad. I have also discover'd that Miss Richland is not indifferent to my thoughtless nephew; and will endeavour, tho' I fear, in vain, to establish

that connexion. But, come, the letter I wait for must be almost finish'd; I'll let you further into my intentions, in the next room. [*Exeunt.*

ACT IV. SCENE I.

CROAKER's *House.* *Enter* LOFTY.

Lofty.

WELL, sure the devil's in me of late, for running my head into such defiles, as nothing but a genius like my own could draw me from. I was formerly contented to husband out my places and pensions with some degree of frugality; but, curse it, of late I have given away the whole Court Register in less time than they could print the title page; yet, hang it, why scruple a lie or two to come at a fine girl, when I every day tell a thousand for nothing. Ha! Honeywood here before me. Could Miss Richland have set him at liberty?

Enter HONEYWOOD.

Mr. Honeywood, I'm glad to see you abroad again. I find my concurrence was not necessary in your unfortunate affairs. I had put things in a train to do your business; but it is not for me to say what I intended doing.

Hon. It was unfortunate indeed, sir. But what adds to my uneasiness is, that while you seem to be

acquainted with my misfortune, I, myself, continue still a stranger to my benefactor.

Lofty. How! not know the friend that served you?

Hon. Cann't guess at the person.

Lofty. Enquire.

Hon. I have, but all I can learn is, that he chooses to remain concealed, and that all enquiry must be fruitless.

Lofty. Must be fruitless?

Hon. Absolutely fruitless.

Lofty. Sure of that?

Hon. Very sure.

Lofty. Then I'll be damn'd if you shall ever know it from me.

Hon. How, sir!

Lofty. I suppose now, Mr. Honeywood, you think my rent-roll very considerable, and that I have vast sums of money to throw away; I know you do. The world to be sure says such things of me.

Hon. The world, by what I learn, is no stranger to your generosity. But where does this tend?

Lofty. To nothing; nothing in the world. The town, to be sure, when it makes such a thing as me the subject of conversation, has asserted, that I never yet patronized a man of merit.

Hon. I have heard instances to the contrary, even from yourself.

Lofty. Yes, Honeywood, and there are instances to the contrary, that you shall never hear from myself.

Hon. Ha, dear sir, permit me to ask you but one question.

Lofty. Sir, ask me no questions: I say, sir, ask me no questions; I'll be damn'd if I answer them.

Hon. I will ask no further. My friend, my benefactor, it is, it must be here, that I am indebted for freedom, for honour. Yes, thou worthiest of men, from the beginning I suspected it, but was afraid to return thanks; which, if undeserved, might seem reproaches.

Lofty. I protest I don't understand all this, Mr. Honeywood. You treat me very cavalierly. I do assure you, sir.——Blood, sir! cann't a man be permitted to enjoy the luxury of his own feelings without all this parade?

Hon. Nay, do not attempt to conceal an action that adds to your honour. Your looks, your air, your manner, all confess it.

Lofty. Confess it! sir. Torture itself, sir, shall never bring me to confess it. Mr. Honeywood, I have admitted you upon terms of friendship. Don't let us fall out; make me happy, and let this be buried in oblivion. You know I hate ostentation; you know I do.——Come, come, Honeywood, you know I always lov'd to be a friend, and not a patron. I beg this may make no kind of distance between us. Come, come, you and I must be more familiar—— Indeed we must.

Hon. Heavens! Can I ever repay such friendship? Is there any way? Thou best of men, can I ever return the obligation?

Lofty. A bagatelle, a mere bagatelle. But I see your heart is labouring to be grateful. You shall be grateful. It would be cruel to disappoint you.

Hon. How! Teach me the manner. Is there any way?

Lofty. From this moment you're mine. Yes, my friend, you shall know it—I'm in love.

Hon. And can I assist you?

Lofty. Nobody so well.

Hon. In what manner? I'm all impatience.

Lofty. You shall make love for me.

Hon. And to whom shall I speak in your favour?

Lofty. To a lady with whom you have great interest, I assure you. Miss Richland.

Hon. Miss Richland!

Lofty. Yes, Miss Richland. She has struck the blow up to the hilt, in my bosom, by Jupiter.

Hon. Heavens! was ever any thing more unfortunate! It is too much to be endur'd.

Lofty. Unfortunate indeed! And yet I can endure it, till you have opened the affair to her for me. Between ourselves, I think she likes me. I'm not apt to boast, but I think she does.

Hon. Indeed! But do you know the person you apply to?

Lofty. Yes, I know you are her friend and mine: that's enough. To you, therefore, I commit the success of my passion. I'll say no more, let friendship do the rest. I have only to add, that if at any time my little interest can be of service—but, hang it, I'll make

no promises—you know my interest is yours at any time. No apologies, my friend, I'll not be answered, it shall be so. [*Exit.*

Hon. Open, generous, unsuspecting man! He little thinks that I love her too; and with such an ardent passion!——But then it was ever but a vain and hopeless one; my torment, my persecution! What shall I do! Love, friendship, a hopeless passion, a deserving friend! Love, that has been my tormentor; a friend, that has, perhaps, distress'd himself, to serve me.——It shall be so. Yes, I will discard the fondling hope from my bosom, and exert all my influence in his favour. And yet to see her in the possession of another!——Insupportable. But then to betray a generous, trusting friend!——Worse, worse. Yes, I'm resolv'd. Let me but be the instrument of their happiness, and then quit a country, where I must for ever despair of finding my own. [*Exit.*

Enter OLIVIA *and* GARNET, *who carries a Milliner's Box.*

Oliv. Dear me, I wish this journey were over. No news of Jarvis, yet? I believe the old peevish creature delays purely to vex me.

Garnet. Why, to be sure, madam, I did hear him say, a little snubbing before marriage would teach you to bear it the better afterwards.

Oliv. To be gone a full hour, tho' he had only to get a bill changed in the city! How provoking!

Garnet. I'll lay my life, Mr. Leontine, that had

twice as much to do, is setting off by this time from his inn; and here you are left behind.

Oliv. Well, let us be prepar'd for his coming, however.——Are you sure you have omitted nothing, Garnet?

Garnet. Not a stick, madam—all's here.——Yet I wish you could take the white and silver to be married in.——It's the worst luck in the world, in any thing but white.——I knew one Bett Stubbs of our town, that was married in red; and, as sure as eggs is eggs, the bridegroom and she had a miff before morning.

Oliv. No matter.——I'm all impatience till we are out of the house.

Garnet. Bless me, madam, I had almost forgot the wedding-ring!——The sweet little thing!——I don't thing it would go on my little finger. And what if I put in a gentleman's night-cap, in case of necessity, madam? But here's Jarvis.

Enter JARVIS.

Oliv. O, Jarvis, are you come at last? We have been ready this half hour. Now let's be going. Let us fly!

Jar. Ay, to Jericho; for we shall have no going to Scotland this bout, I fancy.

Oliv. How! What's the matter?

Jar. Money, money is the matter, madam. We have got no money. What the plague do you send

me of your fool's errand for? My master's bill upon the city is not worth a rush. Here it is; Mrs. Garnet may pin up her hair with it.

Oliv. Undone! How could Honeywood serve us so! What shall we do? Cann't we go without it?

Jar. Go to Scotland without money! To Scotland without money! Lord how some people understand geography! We might as well set sail for Patagonia upon a cork-jacket.

Oliv. Such a disappointment! What a base insincere man was your master, to serve us in this manner. Is this his good-nature?

Jar. Nay, don't talk ill of my master, madam. I won't bear to hear any body talk ill of him but myself.

Garnet. Bless us! now I think on't, madam, you need not be under any uneasiness: I saw Mr. Leontine receive forty guineas from his father just before he set out, and he cann't yet have left the inn. A short letter will reach him there.

Oliv. Well remember'd, Garnet; I'll write immediately.——How's this!——Bless me, my hand trembles so I cann't write a word. Do you write, Garnet; and, upon second thought, it will be better from you.

Garnet. Truly, madam, I write and indite but poorly. I never was kute at my larning. But I'll do what I can to please you. Let me see. All out of my own head, I suppose?

Oliv. Whatever you please?

Garnet. [*Writing.*] Muster Croaker—Twenty guineas, madam?

Oliv. Ay, twenty will do.

Garnet. At the bar of the Talbot till call'd for.—Expedition—Will be blown up—All of a flame——Quick, dispatch—Cupid, the little God of Love——I conclude it, madam, with Cupid; I love to see a love-letter end like poetry.

Oliv. Well, well, what you please, any thing. But how shall we send it? I can trust none of the servants of this family.

Garnet. Odso, madam, Mr. Honeywood's butler is in the next room; he's a dear, sweet man; he'll do any thing for me.

Jar. He! the dog, he'll certainly commit some blunder. He's drunk and sober ten times a day.

Oliv. No matter. Fly, Garnet; any body we can trust will do. [*Exit* Garnet.] Well, Jarvis, now we can have nothing more to interrupt us. You may take up the things, and carry them on to the inn. Have you no hands, Jarvis?

Jar. Soft and fair, young lady. You, that are going to be married, think things can never be done too fast: but we that are old, and know what we are about, must elope methodically, madam.

Oliv. Well, sure, if my indiscretions were to be done over again——

Jar. My life for it, you would do them ten times over.

Oliv. Why will you talk so? If you knew how unhappy they make me———

Jar. Very unhappy, no doubt: I was once just as unhappy when I was going to be married myself. I'll tell you a story about that———

Oliv. A story! when I'm all impatience to be away. Was there ever such a dilatory creature!———

Jar. Well, madam, if we must march, why we will march; that's all. Tho', odds bobs, we have still forgot one thing we should never travel without—a case of good razors, and a box of shaving-powder. But no matter, I believe we shall be pretty well shaved by the way. [*Going.*

Enter GARNET.

Garnet. Undone, undone, madam. Ah, Mr. Jarvis, you said right enough. As sure as death Mr. Honeywood's rogue of a drunken butler dropp'd the letter before he went ten yards from the door. There's old Croaker has just pick'd it up, and is this moment reading it to himself in the hall.

Oliv. Unfortunate! We shall be discover'd.

Garnet. No, madam: don't be uneasy, he can make neither head nor tail of it. To be sure he looks as if he was broke loose from Bedlam about it, but he cann't find what it means for all that. O Lud, he is coming this way all in the horrors!

Oliv. Then let us leave the house this instant, for fear he should ask farther questions. In the mean

time, Garnet, do you write and send off just such another. [*Exeunt.*

Enter CROAKER.

Croak. Death and destruction! Are all the horrors of air, fire, and water, to be levelled only at me! Am I only to be singled out for gunpowder-plots, combustibles, and conflagration!——Here it is—An incendiary letter dropp'd at my door. 'To Muster Croaker, these with speed.' Ay, ay, plain enough the direction: all in the genuine incendiary spelling, and as cramp as the devil. 'With speed.' O, confound your speed. But let me read it once more. [*Reads.*] 'Mustar Croakar as sone as yoew see this leve twenty gunnes at the bar of the Talboot tell caled for or yowe and yower experetion will be al blown up.' Ah, but too plain. Blood and gunpowder in every line of it. Blown up! murderous dog! All blown up!—— Heavens! what have I and my poor family done, to be all blown up! [*Reads.*] 'Our pockets are low, and money we must have.' Ay, there's the reason; they'll blow us up because they have got low pockets. [*Reads.*] 'It is but a short time you have to consider; for if this takes wind, the house will quickly be all of a flame.' Inhuman monsters! blow us up, and then burn us. The earthquake at Lisbon was but a bonfire to it. [*Reads.*] 'Make quick dispatch, and so no more at present. But may Cupid, the little God of Love, go with you wherever you go.' The little God of Love! Cupid, the little God of Love go with me!

Go you to the devil, you and your little Cupid together; I'm so frightened, I scarce know whether I sit, stand, or go. Perhaps this moment I'm treading on lighted matches, blazing brimstone, and barrels of gunpowder. They are preparing to blow me up into the clouds. Murder! We shall be all burnt in our beds; we shall be all burnt in our beds.

Enter Miss RICHLAND.

Miss Rich. Lord, sir, what's the matter?

Croak. Murder's the matter. We shall be all blown up in our beds before morning.

Miss Rich. I hope not, sir.

Croak. What signifies what you hope, madam, when I have a certificate of it here in my hand. Will nothing alarm my family! Sleeping and eating, sleeping and eating is the only work from morning till night in my house. My insensible crew could sleep, tho' rock'd by an earthquake; and fry beef steaks at a volcano.

Miss Rich. But, sir, you have alarmed them so often already, we have nothing but earthquakes, famines, plagues, and mad dogs, from year's end to year's end. You remember, sir, it is not above a month ago, you assur'd us of a conspiracy among the bakers, to poison us in our bread; and so kept the whole family a week upon potatoes.

Croak. And potatoes were too good for them.—But why do I stand talking here with a girl, when I should be facing the enemy without? Here, John,

Nicodemus, search the house. Look into the cellars, to see if there be any combustibles below; and above, in the apartments, that no matches be thrown in at the windows. Let all the fires be put out, and let the engine be drawn out in the yard, to play upon the house in case of necessity. [*Exit.*

Miss Rich. What can he mean by all this? Yet, why should I enquire, when he alarms us in this manner almost every day! But Honeywood has desired an interview with me in private. What can he mean; or, rather, what means this palpitation at his approach! It is the first time he ever shewed any thing in his conduct that seem'd particular. Sure he cannot mean to——but he's here.

Enter HONEYWOOD.

Hon. I presum'd to solicit this interview, madam, before I left town, to be permitted—

Miss Rich. Indeed! leaving town, sir?—

Hon. Yes, madam; perhaps the kingdom. I have presumed, I say, to desire the favour of this interview—in order to disclose something which our long friendship prompts. And yet my fears—

Miss Rich. His fears! What are his fears to mine! [*Aside.*] We have indeed been long acquainted, sir; very long. If I remember, our first meeting was at the French Ambassador's.—Do you recollect how you were pleas'd to rally me upon my complexion there?

Hon. Perfectly, madam; I presum'd to reprove you for painting: but your warmer blushes soon

convinc'd the company, that the colouring was all from nature.

Miss Rich. And yet you only meant it, in your good natur'd way, to make me pay a compliment to myself. In the same manner you danc'd that night with the most awkward woman in company, because you saw nobody else would take her out.

Hon. Yes; and was rewarded the next night, by dancing with the finest woman in company, whom every body wish'd to take out.

Miss Rich. Well, sir, if you thought so then, I fear your judgment has since corrected the errors of a first impression. We generally shew to most advantage at first. Our sex are like poor tradesmen, that put all their best goods to be seen at the windows.

Hon. The first impression, madam, did indeed deceive me. I expected to find a woman with all the faults of conscious flattered beauty. I expected to find her vain and insolent. But every day has since taught me that it is possible to possess sense without pride, and beauty without affectation.

Miss Rich. This, sir, is a style very unusual with Mr. Honeywood; and I should be glad to know why he thus attempts to encrease that vanity, which his own lessons hath taught me to despise.

Hon. I ask pardon, madam. Yet, from our long friendship, I presumed I might have some right to offer, without offence, what you may refuse without offending.

Miss Rich. Sir! I beg you'd reflect; tho', I fear, I shall scarce have any power to refuse a request of yours; yet, you may be precipitate: consider, sir.

Hon. I own my rashness; but, as I plead the cause of friendship, of one who loves—Don't be alarmed, madam—Who loves you with the most ardent passion; whose whole happiness is placed in you—

Miss Rich. I fear, sir, I shall never find whom you mean, by this description of him.

Hon. Ah, madam, it but too plainly points him out; tho' he should be too humble himself to urge his pretensions, or you too modest to understand them.

Miss Rich. Well; it would be affectation any longer to pretend ignorance; and, I will own, sir, I have long been prejudiced in his favour. It was but natural to wish to make his heart mine, as he seem'd himself ignorant of its value.

Hon. I see she always lov'd him [*Aside.*] I find, madam, you're already sensible of his worth, his passion. How happy is my friend, to be the favourite of one with such sense to distinguish merit, and such beauty to reward it.

Miss Rich. Your friend! sir. What friend?

Hon. My best friend—My friend Mr. Lofty, madam.

Miss Rich. He, sir!

Hon. Yes, he, madam. He is, indeed, what your warmest wishes might have form'd him. And to his

other qualities, he adds that of the most passionate regard for you.

Miss Rich. Amazement!—No more of this, I beg you, sir.

Hon. I see your confusion, madam, and know how to interpret it. And since I so plainly read the language of your heart, shall I make my friend happy, by communicating your sentiments?

Miss Rich. By no means.

Hon. Excuse me; I must; I know you desire it.

Miss Rich. Mr. Honeywood, let me tell you, that you wrong my sentiments and yourself. When I first applied to your friendship, I expected advice and assistance; but now, sir, I see that it is vain to expect happiness from him, who has been so bad an œconomist of his own; and that I must disclaim his friendship, who ceases to be a friend to himself. [*Exit.*

Hon. How is this! she has confessed she lov'd him, and yet she seemed to part in displeasure. Can I have done any thing to reproach myself with? No; I believe not; yet, after all, these things should not be done by a third person; I should have spared her confusion. My friendship carried me a little too far.

Enter CROAKER, *with the letter in his hand, and Mrs.* CROAKER.

Mrs. Croak. Ha, ha, ha! And so, my dear, it's your supreme wish that I should be quite wretched upon this occasion? Ha, ha.

Croak. [*Mimicking.*] Ha, ha, ha! and so, my dear, it's your supreme pleasure to give me no better consolation?

Mrs. Croak. Positively, my dear, what is this incendiary stuff and trumpery to me? Our house may travel thro' the air like the house of Loretto, for aught I care, if I'm to be miserable in it.

Croak. Would to Heaven it were converted into an house of correction for your benefit. Have we not every thing to alarm us? Perhaps, this very moment the tragedy is beginning.

Mrs. Croak. Then let us reserve our distress till the rising of the curtain, or give them the money they want, and have done with them.

Croak. Give them my money!—And pray, what right have they to my money?

Mrs. Croak. And pray, what right then have you to my good humour?

Croak. And so your good humour advises me to part with my money? Why then, to tell your good humour a piece of my mind, I'd sooner part with my wife. Here's Mr. Honeywood, see what he'll say to it. My dear Honeywood, look at this incendiary letter dropped at my door. It will freeze you with terror; and yet lovey here can read it—can read it, and laugh.

Mrs. Croak. Yes, and so will Mr. Honeywood.

Croak. If he does, I'll suffer to be hanged the next minute in the rogue's place, that's all.

Mrs. Croak. Speak, Mr. Honeywood; is there any thing more foolish than my husband's fright upon this occasion?

Hon. It would not become me to decide, madam; but doubtless, the greatness of his terrors now, will but invite them to renew their villany another time.

Mrs. Croak. I told you, he'd be of my opinion.

Croak. How, sir! do you maintain that I should lie down under such an injury, and shew, neither by my tears or complaints, that I have something of the spirit of a man in me?

Hon. Pardon me, sir. You ought to make the loudest complaints, if you desire redress. The surest way to have redress, is to be earnest in the pursuit of it.

Croak. Ay, whose opinion is he of now?

Mrs. Croak. But don't you think that laughing off our fears is the best way.

Hon. What is the best, madam, few can say; but I'll maintain it to be a very wise way.

Croak. But we are talking of the best.——Surely the best way is to face the enemy in the field, and not wait till he plunders us in our very bed-chamber.

Hon. Why, sir, as to the best, that—that's a very wise way too.

Mrs. Croak. But can any thing be more absurd, than to double our distresses by our apprehensions, and put it in the power of every low fellow, that

can scrawl ten words of wretched spelling, to torment us?

Hon. Without doubt, nothing more absurd.

Croak. How! would it not be more absurd to despise the rattle till we are bit by the snake?

Hon. Without doubt, perfectly absurd.

Croak. Then you are of my opinion?

Hon. Entirely.

Mrs. Croak. And you reject mine?

Hon. Heavens forbid, madam. No, sure no reasoning can be more just than yours. We ought certainly to despise malice if we cannot oppose it, and not make the incendiary's pen as fatal to our repose as the highwayman's pistol.

Mrs. Croak. O! then you think I'm quite right?

Hon. Perfectly right.

Croak. A plague of plagues, we cann't be both right.——I ought to be sorry, or I ought to be glad. ——My hat must be on my head, or my hat must be off.

Mrs. Croak. Certainly, in two opposite opinions, if one be perfectly reasonable, the other cann't be perfectly right.

Hon. And why may not both be right, madam: Mr. Croaker in earnestly seeking redress, and you in waiting the event with good humour? Pray let me see the letter again. I have it. This letter requires twenty guineas to be left at the bar of the Talbot inn. If it be indeed an incendiary letter, what if you and I, sir,

go there; and, when the writer comes to be paid his expected booty, seize him.

Croak. My dear friend, it's the very thing; the very thing.——While I walk by the door, you shall plant yourself in ambush near the bar; burst out upon the miscreant like a masqued battery; extort a confession at once, and so hang him up by surprise.

Hon. Yes; but I would not choose to exercise too much severity. It is my maxim, sir, that crimes generally punish themselves.

Croak. Well, but we may upbraid him a little, I suppose? [*Ironically.*

Hon. Ay, but not punish him too rigidly.

Croak. Well, well, leave that to my own benevolence.

Hon. Well, I do: but remember that universal benevolence is the first law of nature.

[*Exeunt* Honeywood *and Mrs.* Croaker.

Croak. Yes; and my universal benevolence will hang the dog, if he had as many necks as a hydra. [*Exit.*

ACT V. SCENE I.

An Inn. Enter OLIVIA *and* JARVIS.

Olivia.

WELL, we have got safe to the inn, however. Now, if the post-chaise were ready——

Jar. The horses are just finishing their oats; and, as they are not going to be married, they choose to take their own time.

Oliv. You are for ever giving wrong motives to my impatience.

Jar. Be as impatient as you will, the horses must take their own time; besides, you don't consider, we have got no answer from our fellow-traveller yet. If we hear nothing from Mr. Leontine, we have only one way left us.

Oliv. What way?

Jar. The way home again.

Oliv. Not so. I have made a resolution to go, and nothing shall induce me to break it.

Jar. Ay, resolutions are well kept when they jump with inclination. However, I'll go hasten things without. And I'll call too at the bar to see if any thing should be left for us there. Don't be in such a plaguy hurry, madam, and we shall go the faster, I promise you. [*Exit* Jarvis.

Enter Landlady.

Landl. What! Solomon; why don't you move? Pipes and tobacco for the Lamb there.——Will on body answer? To the Dolphin; quick. The Angel has been outrageous this half hour. Did your ladyship call, madam?

Oliv. No, madam.

Landl. I find, as you're for Scotland, madam—But that's no business of mine; married, or not married,

I ask no questions. To be sure, we had a sweet little couple set off from this two days ago for the same place. The gentleman, for a taylor, was, to be sure, as fine a spoken taylor as ever blew froth from a full pot. And the young lady so bashful, it was near half an hour before we could get her to finish a pint of raspberry between us.

Oliv. But this gentleman and I are not going to be married, I assure you.

Landl. May be not. That's no business of mine; for certain, Scotch marriages seldom turn out. There was, of my own knowledge, Miss Macfag, that married her father's footman.—Alack-a-day, she and her husband soon parted, and now keep separate cellars in Hedge-lane.

Oliv. A very pretty picture of what lies before me. [*Aside.*

Enter LEONTINE.

Leont. My dear Olivia, my anxiety till you were out of danger was too great to be resisted. I could not help coming to see you set out, tho' it exposes us to a discovery.

Oliv. May every thing you do prove as fortunate. Indeed, Leontine, we have been most cruelly disappointed. Mr. Honeywood's bill upon the city has, it seems, been protested, and we have been utterly at a loss how to proceed.

Leont. How! An offer of his own too. Sure, he could not mean to deceive us.

Oliv. Depend upon his sincerity; he only mistook the desire for the power of serving us. But let us think no more of it. I believe the post-chaise is ready by this.

Landl. Not quite yet: and, begging your ladyship's pardon, I don't think your ladyship quite ready for the post-chaise. The north road is a cold place, madam. I have a drop in the house of as pretty raspberry as ever was tipt over tongue. Just a thimble-full to keep the wind off your stomach. To be sure, the last couple we had here, they said it was a perfect nosegay. Ecod, I sent them both away as good natur'd—Up went the blinds, round went the wheels, and drive away post-boy, was the word.

Enter CROAKER.

Croak. Well, while my friend Honeywood is upon the post of danger at the bar, it must be my business to have an eye about me here. I think I know an incendiary's look; for, wherever the devil makes a purchase, he never fails to set his mark. Ha! who have we here? My son and daughter! What can they be doing here!

Landl. I tell you, madam, it will do you good; I think I know by this time what's good for the north road. It's a raw night, madam.—Sir——

Leont. Not a drop more, good madam. I should now take it as a greater favour if you hasten the horses, for I am afraid to be seen myself.

Landl. That shall be done. Wha, Solomon! are you all dead there? Wha, Solomon, I say.

[*Exit bawling.*

Oliv. Well, I dread lest an expedition begun in fear should end in repentance.—Every moment we stay increases our danger, and adds to my apprehensions.

Leont. There's no danger, trust me, my dear; there can be none: if Honeywood has acted with honour, and kept my father, as he promised, in employment till we are out of danger, nothing can interrupt our journey.

Oliv. I have no doubt of Mr. Honeywood's sincerity, and even his desires to serve us. My fears are from your father's suspicions. A mind so disposed to be alarmed without a cause, will be but too ready when there's a reason.

Leont. Why, let him, when we are out of his power. But, believe me, Olivia, you have no great reason to dread his resentment. His repining temper, as it does no manner of injury to himself, so will it never do harm to others. He only frets to keep himself employed, and scolds for his private amusement.

Oliv. I don't know that; but I'm sure, on some occasions, it makes him look most shockingly.

Croak. [*Discovering himself.*] How does he look now?—How does he look now?

Oliv. Ah!

Leont. Undone.

Croak. How do I look now? Sir, I am your very humble servant. Madam, I am yours. What, you are going off, are you? Then, first, if you please, take a word or two from me with you before you go. Tell me first where you are going? and when you have told me that, perhaps, I shall know as little as I did before.

Leont. If that be so, our answer might but increase your displeasure, without adding to your information.

Croak. I want no information from you, puppy: and you too, good madam, what answer have you got? Eh, [*A cry without, stop him.*] I think I heard a noise. My friend, Honeywood, without—has he seized the incendiary? Ah, no, for now I hear no more on't.

Leont. Honeywood without! Then, sir, it was Mr. Honeywood that directed you hither.

Croak. No, sir, it was Mr. Honeywood conducted me hither.

Leont. Is it possible?

Croak. Possible! Why, he's in the house now, sir. More anxious about me than my own son, sir.

Leont. Then, sir, he's a villain.

Croak. How, sirrah! a villain, because he takes most care of your father? I'll not bear it. I tell you I'll not bear it. Honeywood is a friend to the family, and I'll have him treated as such.

Leont. I shall study to repay his friendship as it deserves.

Croak. Ah, rogue, if you knew how earnestly he

entered into my griefs, and pointed out the means to detect them, you would love him as I do. [*A cry without, stop him.*] Fire and fury! they have seized the incendiary: they have the villain, the incendiary in view. Stop him, stop an incendiary, a murderer; stop him. [*Exit.*

Oliv. Oh, my terrors! What can this new tumult mean?

Leont. Some new mark, I suppose, of Mr. Honeywood's sincerity. But we shall have satisfaction: he shall give me instant satisfaction.

Oliv. It must not be, my Leontine, if you value my esteem, or my happiness. Whatever be our fate, let us not add guilt to our misfortunes—Consider that our innocence will shortly be all we have left us. You must forgive him.

Leont. Forgive him! Has he not in every instance betrayed us? Forced me to borrow money from him, which appears a mere trick to delay us: promised to keep my father engaged till we were out of danger, and here brought him to the very scene of our escape?

Oliv. Don't be precipitate. We may yet be mistaken.

Enter Post-boy, *dragging in* JARVIS: HONEYWOOD *entering soon after.*

Post. Ay, master, we have him fast enough. Here is the incendiary dog. I'm entitled to the reward; I'll

take my oath I saw him ask for the money at the bar, and then run for it.

Hon. Come, bring him along. Let us see him. Let him learn to blush for his crimes. [*Discovering his mistake.*] Death! what's here! Jarvis, Leontine, Olivia! What can all this mean?

Jar. Why, I'll tell you what it means: that I was an old fool, and that you are my master—that's all.

Hon. Confusion!

Leont. Yes, sir, I find you have kept your word with me. After such baseness, I wonder how you can venture to see the man you have injured.

Hon. My dear Leontine, by my life, my honour—

Leont. Peace, peace, for shame; and do not continue to aggravate baseness by hypocrisy. I know you, sir, I know you.

Hon. Why, won't you hear me! By all that's just, I knew not——

Leont. Hear you, sir! to what purpose? I now see through all your low arts; your ever complying with every opinion; your never refusing any request; your friendship as common as a prostitute's favours, and as fallacious; all these, sir, have long been contemptible to the world, and are now perfectly so to me.

Hon. Ha! contemptible to the world! That reaches me. [*Aside.*

Leont. All the seeming sincerity of your professions I now find were only allurements to betray; and all your seeming regret for their consequences only cal-

culated to cover the cowardice of your heart. Draw, villain!

Enter CROAKER, *out of Breath.*

Croak. Where is the villain? Where is the incendiary? [*Seizing the Post-boy.*] Hold him fast, the dog; he has the gallows in his face. Come, you dog, confess; confess all, and hang yourself.

Post. Zounds! Master, what do you throttle me for?

Croak. [*Beating him.*] Dog, do you resist; do you resist?

Post. Zounds! Master, I'm not he; there's the man that we thought was the rogue, and turns out to be one of the company.

Croak. How!

Hon. Mr. Croaker, we have all been under a strange mistake here; I find there is nobody guilty; it was all an error; entirely an error of our own.

Croak. And I say, sir, that you're in an error; for there's guilt and double guilt, a plot, a damn'd jesuitical pestilential plot, and I must have proof of it.

Hon. Do but hear me.

Croak. What, you intend to bring 'em off, I suppose; I'll hear nothing.

Hon. Madam, you seem at least calm enough to hear reason.

Oliv. Excuse me.

Hon. Good Jarvis, let me then explain it to you.

Jar. What signifies explanations, when the thing is done?

Hon. Will nobody hear me? Was there ever such a set, so blinded by passion and prejudice! [*To the*

Post-boy.] My good friend, I believe you'll be surprised when I assure you——

Post. Sure me nothing—I'm sure of nothing but a good beating.

Croak. Come then, you, madam, if you ever hope for any favour or forgiveness, tell me sincerely all you know of this affair.

Oliv. Unhappily, sir, I'm but too much the cause of your suspicions: you see before you, sir, one that with false pretences has stept into your family to betray it: not your daughter——

Croak. Not my daughter!

Oliv. Not your daughter—but a mean deceiver—who—support me, I cannot——

Hon. Help, she's going, give her air.

Croak. Ay, ay, take the young woman to the air; I would not hurt a hair of her head, whose ever daughter she may be—not so bad as that neither.

[*Exeunt all but* Croaker.

Croak. Yes, yes, all's out; I now see the whole affair: my son is either married, or going to be so, to this lady, whom he imposed upon me as his sister. Ay, certainly so; and yet I don't find it afflicts me so much as one might think. There's the advantage of fretting away our misfortunes beforehand, we never feel them when they come.

Enter Miss RICHLAND *and Sir* WILLIAM.

Sir Will. But how do you know, madam, that my nephew intends setting off from this place?

Miss Rich. My maid assured me he was come to this inn, and my own knowledge of his intending to leave the kingdom, suggested the rest. But what do I see, my guardian here before us! Who, my dear sir, could have expected meeting you here; to what accident do we owe this pleasure?

Croak. To a fool, I believe.

Miss Rich. But to what purpose did you come?

Croak. To play the fool.

Miss Rich. But with whom?

Croak. With greater fools than myself.

Miss Rich. Explain.

Croak. Why, Mr. Honeywood brought me here, to do nothing now I am here; and my son is going to be married to I don't know who that is here; so now you are as wise as I am.

Miss Rich. Married! to whom, sir?

Croak. To Olivia; my daughter, as I took her to be; but who the devil she is, or whose daughter she is, I know no more than the man in the moon.

Sir Will. Then, sir, I can inform you; and, tho' a stranger, yet you shall find me a friend to your family: it will be enough at present to assure you, that both in point of birth and fortune, the young lady is at least your son's equal. Being left by her father, Sir James Woodville—

Croak. Sir James Woodville! What, of the West?

Sir Will. Being left by him, I say, to the care of a mercenary wretch, whose only aim was to secure her fortune to himself, she was sent into France, under pre-

tence of education; and there every art was tried to fix her for life in a convent, contrary to her inclinations. Of this I was informed upon my arrival at Paris; and, as I had been once her father's friend, I did all in my power to frustrate her guardian's base intentions. I had even meditated to rescue her from his authority, when your son stept in with more pleasing violence, gave her liberty, and you a daughter.

Croak. But I intend to have a daughter of my own choosing, sir. A young lady, sir, whose fortune, by my interest with those that have interest, will be double what my son has a right to expect. Do you know Mr. Lofty, sir?

Sir Will. Yes, sir; and know that you are deceived in him. But step this way, and I'll convince you.

[Croaker *and Sir* William *seem to confer.*

Enter HONEYWOOD.

Hon. Obstinate man, still to persist in his outrage! Insulted by him, despis'd by all, I now begin to grow contemptible, even to myself. How have I sunk by too great an assiduity to please! How have I overtax'd all my abilities, lest the approbation of a single fool should escape me! But all is now over; I have survived my reputation, my fortune, my friendships, and nothing remains henceforward for me but solitude and repentance.

Miss Rich. Is it true, Mr. Honeywood, that you

are setting off, without taking leave of your friends? The report is, that you are quitting England. Can it be?

Hon. Yes, madam; and tho' I am so unhappy as to have fallen under your displeasure, yet, thank Heaven, I leave you to happiness; to one who loves you, and deserves your love; to one who has power to procure you affluence, and generosity to improve your enjoyment of it.

Miss Rich. And are you sure, sir, that the gentleman you mean is what you describe him?

Hon. I have the best assurances of it, his serving me. He does indeed deserve the highest happiness, and that is in your power to confer. As for me, weak and wavering as I have been, obliged by all, and incapable of serving any, what happiness can I find but in solitude? What hope but in being forgotten?

Miss Rich. A thousand! to live among friends that esteem you, whose happiness it will be to be permitted to oblige you.

Hon. No, madam; my resolution is fix'd. Inferiority among strangers is easy; but among those that once were equals, insupportable. Nay, to shew you how far my resolution can go, I can now speak with calmness of my former follies, my vanity, my dissipation, my weakness. I will even confess, that, among the number of my other presumptions, I had the insolence to think of loving you. Yes, madam, while I was pleading the passion of another, my heart

was tortured with its own. But it is over, it was unworthy our friendship, and let it be forgotten.

Miss Rich. You amaze me!

Hon. But you'll forgive it, I know you will; since the confession should not have come from me even now, but to convince you of the sincerity of my intention of—never mentioning it more. [*Going.*

Miss Rich. Stay, sir, one moment—Ha! he here—

Enter LOFTY.

Lofty. Is the coast clear? None but friends. I have followed you here with a trifling piece of intelligence: but it goes no farther, things are not yet ripe for a discovery. I have spirits working at a certain board; your affair at the Treasury will be done in less than—a thousand years. Mum!

Miss Rich. Sooner, sir, I should hope.

Lofty. Why, yes, I believe it may, if it falls into proper hands, that know where to push and where to parry; that know how the land lies—eh, Honeywood?

Miss Rich. It is fallen into yours.

Lofty. Well, to keep you no longer in suspense, your thing is done. It is done, I say—that's all. I have just had assurances from Lord Neverout, that the claim has been examined, and found admissible. *Quietus* is the word, madam.

Hon. But how! his lordship has been at Newmarket these ten days.

Lofty. Indeed! Then Sir Gilbert Goose must have been most damnably mistaken. I had it of him.

Miss Rich. He! why Sir Gilbert and his family have been in the country this month.

Lofty. This month! It must certainly be so——Sir Gilbert's letter did come to me from Newmarket, so that he must have met his lordship there; and so it came about.——I have his letter about me, I'll read it to you.—[*Taking out a large bundle.*]—That's from Paoli of Corsica, that from the Marquis of Squilachi.——Have you a mind to see a letter from Count Poniatowski, now king of Poland——Honest Pon——[*Searching.*]——O, sir, what are you here too?—I'll tell you what, honest friend, if you have not absolutely delivered my letter to Sir William Honeywood, you may return it. The thing will do without him.

Sir Will. Sir, I have delivered it, and must inform you, it was received with the most mortifying contempt.

Croak. Contempt! Mr. Lofty, what can that mean?

Lofty. Let him go on, let him go on, I say. You'll find it come to something presently.

Sir Will. Yes, Sir, I believe you'll be amazed, if, after waiting some time in the anti-chamber, after being surveyed with insolent curiosity by the passing servants, I was at last assured, that Sir William Honeywood knew no such person, and I must certainly have been imposed upon.

Lofty. Good; let me die, very good. Ha, ha, ha!

Croak. Now, for my life, I cann't find out half the goodness of it.

Lofty. You cann't. Ha, ha!

Croak. No, for the soul of me; I think it was as confounded a bad answer, as ever was sent from one private gentleman to another.

Lofty. And so you cann't find out the force of the message? Why, I was in the house at that very time. Ha, ha! It was I that sent that very answer to my own letter. Ha, ha!

Croak. Indeed! How! Why!

Lofty. In one word, things between Sir William and me must be behind the curtain. A party has many eyes. He sides with Lord Buzzard, I side with Sir Gilbert Goose. So that unriddles the mystery.

Croak. And so it does indeed, and all my suspicions are over.

Lofty. Your suspicions!——What then you have been suspecting, you have been suspecting, have you? Mr. Croaker, you and I were friends, we are friends no longer. Never talk to me. It's over; I say, it's over.

Croak. As I hope for your favour, I did not mean to offend. It escaped me. Don't be discomposed.

Lofty. Zounds, sir, but I am discomposed, and will be discomposed. To be treated thus!—Who am I!——Was it for this I have been dreaded both by inns and outs!——Have I been libelled in the Gazetteer, and praised in St. James's; have I been chaired at Wildman's, and a speaker at Merchant Taylor's Hall;

have I had my hand to addresses, and my head in the print-shops, and talk to me of suspects!

Croak. My dear sir, be pacified. What can you have but asking pardon?

Lofty. Sir, I will not be pacified—Suspects! Who am I! To be used thus, have I paid court to men in favour to serve my friends, the lords of the Treasury, Sir William Honeywood, and the rest of the gang, and talk to me of suspects!—Who am I, I say, who am I!

Sir Will. Since, sir, you're so pressing for an answer, I'll tell you who you are. A gentleman as well acquainted with politics, as with men in power: as well acquainted with persons of fashion, as with modesty; with lords of the Treasury, as with truth; and with all, as you are with Sir William Honeywood. I am Sir William Honeywood.

[*Discovering his ensigns of the Bath.*

Croak. Sir William Honeywood!

Hon. Astonishment! my uncle! [*Aside.*

Lofty. So then my confounded genius has been all this time only leading me up to the garret, in order to fling me out of the window.

Croak. What, Mr. Importance, and are these your works? Suspect you! You, who have been dreaded by the ins and outs: you, who have had your hand to addresses, and your head stuck up in print-shops. If you were served right, you should have your head stuck up in the pillory.

Lofty. Ay, stick it where you will, for, by the

ord, it cuts but a very poor figure where it sticks at present.

Sir Will. Well, Mr. Croaker, I hope you now see how incapable this gentleman is of serving you, and how little Miss Richland has to expect from his influence.

Croak. Ay, sir, too well I see it, and I cann't but say I have had some boding of it these ten days. So I'm resolved, since my son has placed his affections on a lady of moderate fortune, to be satisfied with his choice, and not run the hazard of another Mr. Lofty, in helping him to a better.

Sir Will. I approve your resolution, and here they come, to receive a confirmation of your pardon and consent.

Enter Mrs. CROAKER, JARVIS, LEONTINE, *and* OLIVIA.

Mrs. Croak. Where's my husband!—Come, come, lovey, you must forgive them. Jarvis here, has been to tell me the whole affair; and, I say, you must forgive them. Our own was a stolen match, you know, my dear; and we never had any reason to repent of it.

Croak. I wish we could both say so: however, this gentleman, Sir William Honeywood, has been beforehand with you, in obtaining their pardon. So, if the two poor fools have a mind to marry, I think, we can tack them together without crossing the tweed for it.

[*Joining their hands.*

Leont. How blest, and unexpected! What, what

can we say to such goodness! But our future obedience shall be the best reply. And, as for this gentleman, to whom we owe——

Sir Will. Excuse me, sir, if I interrupt your thanks, as I have here an interest that calls me. [*Turning to* Honeywood.] Yes, sir, you are surprised to see me; and I own that a desire of correcting your follies led me hither. I saw, with indignation, the errors of a mind that only sought applause from others; that easiness of disposition, which, tho' inclin'd to the right, had not courage to condemn the wrong. I saw with regret those splendid errors, that still took name from some neighbouring duty. Your charity, that was but injustice; your benevolence, that was but weakness; and your friendship but credulity. I saw, with regret, great talents and extensive learning only employed to add sprightliness to error, and increase your perplexities. I saw your mind with a thousand natural charms: but the greatness of it's beauty served only to heighten my pity for it's prostitution.

Hon. Cease to upbraid me, sir; I have for some time but too strongly felt the justice of your reproaches. But there is one way still left me. Yes, sir, I have determined, this very hour, to quit for ever a place where I have made myself the voluntary slave of all; and to seek among strangers that fortitude which may give strength to the mind, and marshal all its dissipated virtues. Yet, ere I depart, permit me to solicit favour for this gentleman; who, nowithstanding what has happened, has laid me under the most signal obligations. Mr. Lofty——

Lofty. Mr. Honeywood, I'm resolv'd upon a reformation, as well as you. I now begin to find, that the man who first invented the art of speaking truth was a much cunninger fellow than I thought him. And to prove that I design to speak truth for the future, I must now assure you, that you owe your late enlargement to another; as, upon my soul, I had no hand in the matter. So now, if any of the company has a mind for preferment, he may take my place. I'm determined to resign. [*Exit.*

Hon. How have I been deceived!

Sir Will. No, sir, you have been obliged to a kinder, fairer friend for that favour. To Miss Richland. Would she complete our joy, and make the man she has honoured by her friendship happy in her love, I should then forget all, and be as blest as the welfare of my dearest kinsman can make me.

Miss Rich. After what is past, it would be but affectation to pretend to indifference. Yes, I will own an attachment, which, I find, was more than friendship. And if my entreaties cannot alter his resolution to quit the country; I will even try, if my hand has not power to detain him. [*Giving her hand.*

Hon. Heavens! how can I have deserved all this? How express my happiness, my gratitude! A moment, like this, overpays an age of apprehension.

Croak. Well, now I see content in every face; but Heaven send we be all better this day three months.

Sir Will. Henceforth, nephew, learn to respect

yourself. He who seeks only for applause from without, has all his happiness in another's keeping.

Hon. Yes, sir, I now too plainly perceive my errors. My vanity, in attempting to please all, by fearing to offend any. My meanness in approving folly, lest fools should disapprove. Henceforth, therefore, it shall be my study to reserve my pity for real distress; my friendship for true merit; and my love for her, who first taught me what it is to be happy. [*Exeunt omnes.*

EPILOGUE*.

Spoken by Mrs. BULKLEY.

AS puffing quacks some caitiff wretch procure
To swear the pill, or drop, has wrought a cure;
Thus on the stage, our play-wrights still depend
For Epilogues and Prologues on some friend,
Who knows each art of coaxing up the town,
And make full many a bitter pill go down.
Conscious of this, our bard has gone about,
And teas'd each rhyming friend to help him out.
An Epilogue, things cann't go on without it;
It could not fail, would you but set about it.
Young man, cries one (a bard laid up in clover)
Alas, young man, my writing days are over;
Let boys play tricks, and kick the straw, not I;
Your brother doctor there, perhaps, may try.
What I! dear sir, the doctor interposes;
What, plant my thistle, sir, among his roses!
No, no, I've other contests to maintain;
To-night I head our troops at Warwick-lane.
Go, ask your manager—Who, me! Your pardon;
Those things are not our fort at Covent-Garden.

* The Author, in expectation of an Epilogue from a friend at Oxford, deferred writing one himself till the very last hour. What is here offerred, owes all its success to the graceful manner of the Actress who spoke it.

Our author's friends, thus plac'd at happy distance,
Give him good words indeed, but no assistance.
As some unhappy wight, at some new play,
At the pit-door stands elbowing away,
While oft, with many a smile, and many a shrug,
He eyes the centre, where his friends sit snug,
His simpering friends, with pleasure in their eyes,
Sink as he sinks, and as he rises rise:
He nods, they nod; he cringes, they grimace;
But not a soul will budge to give him place.
Since then, unhelp'd, our bard must now conform
To 'bide the pelting of this pittiless storm,
Blame where you must, be candid where you can,
And be each critic the Good Natur'd Man.

THE END.

THE FOUNDLING.

A

COMEDY,

BY MR. EDWARD MOORE.

ADAPTED FOR

THEATRICAL REPRESENTATION,

AS PERFORMED AT THE

THEATRES-ROYAL,

DRURY-LANE AND COVENT-GARDEN.

REGULATED FROM THE PROMPT-BOOKS,

By Permission of the Managers.

"" The Lines distinguished by inverted Commas, are omitted in the Representation.""

LONDON:

Printed for the Proprietors, under the Direction of

JOHN BELL, British-Library, STRAND,

Bookseller to His Royal Highness the PRINCE of WALES.

MDCCXCII.

TO HER GRACE

THE DUTCHESS OF BEDFORD.

MADAM.

THE permission your Grace honours me with, of presenting the Foundling *to your protection, is the highest gratification of my pride, and my best security for the indulgence of the town. It is in writing as in life; an introduction to the world by a great name is a sanction, even where merit is wanting, and can adorn it where it is. And though my pretensions are inconsiderable, my fears are lessened, while I can boast the Dutchess of Bedford for my patroness.*

I have no intention to alarm your Grace with the common flattery of dedications. The mind that deserves praise, is above receiving it. Your own consciousness, though in your humblest hours, will afford truer satisfaction than the best written panegyric, But while your Grace forbids me praise, I am at liberty to indulge my wishes for your happiness and honour. In those, I may be allowed to name the Duke of Bedford with his Dutchess, and to rejoice, with every Englishman, that the highest dignities are the reward of the highest merit.

If I descend to say a little of myself, I shall hope

for your Grace's pardon. This is my first attempt in dramatic poetry. Whether I deserve the favour the town has shewn me, is submitted to your Grace's candour, and the judgment of my readers. The disapprobation which the character of Faddle met with the first night, made it necessary for me to shorten it in almost every scene, where it was not immediately connected with the fable. But though success has attended the alteration, I have ventured to publish it in its original dress; submitting it still to your Grace and the public, from whom I have no appeal to my own partiality. But I am detaining your Grace too long, and shall only add, that I am,

Madam,

Your Grace's

Most obliged, and

Most obedient servant,

EDWARD MOORE.

THE FOUNDLING.

THIS Play, though it is now unaccustomed "to vi- "sit the glimpses of the Moon" upon our Theatres, is better worth such distinction than many slight flitting shadows, that pass for things of substance.

One circumstance, which may contribute to this oblivion, is a resemblance which this Play certainly does discover of the CONSCIOUS LOVERS.—By some critics it is deemed the superior play, and the reason given is that its interest is unmixed with the episode of menial intrigue, and the flippant impertinence of a *Footman* and a *Chambermaid*.—To all this it may be answered, that these characters, when they take a large share in the business of a comedy, are the agents of superior persons, and bring about the end of the drama, are by no means to be rejected by a fastidious delicacy. Happily the dull decorum of the French school is sinking into contempt now even with that nation itself; and men, when they survey the characters of a *Drama*, only require that they should be faithful to *Nature*, to be completely satisfied. We *have* perpetually occasion for servants; *confide* in them, and are served by them, in our business, in our pleasure; they also are of our kind, and have business and pleasures of their *own*.

PROLOGUE.

Written by Mr. Brooke.

UNPRACTIS'D in the Drama's artful page,
And new to all the dangers of the stage,
Where judgment sits to save or damn his play,
Our poet trembles for his first essay.
He, like all authors, a conforming race!
Writes to the taste and genius of the place;
Intent to fix, and emulous to please
The happy sense of these politer days,
He forms a model of a virtuous sort,
And gives you more of moral than of sport;
He rather aims to draw the melting sigh,
Or steal the pitying tear from beauty's eye;
To touch the strings that humanise our kind,
Man's sweetest strain, the music of the mind.
Ladies, he bids me tell you, that from you
His first, his fav'rite character he drew;
A young, a lovely, unexperienc'd maid,
In honest truth and innocence array'd;
Of fortune destitute, with wrongs oppress'd,
By fraud attempted, and by love distress'd;
Yet, guarded still, and ev'ry suff'ring past,
Her virtue meets the sure reward at last.

From such examples shall the sex be taught,
How virtue fixes whom their eyes have caught;
How honour beautifies the fairest face,
Improves the mien, and dignifies the grace.
And hence the libertine, who builds a name
On the base ruins of a woman's fame,
Shall own, the best of human blessings lie
In the chaste honours of the nuptial tie;
There lives the home-felt sweet, the near delight,
There peace reposes, and there joys unite;
And female virtue was by Heaven design'd
To charm, to polish, and to bless mankind.

Dramatis Personæ.

COVENT-GARDEN.

Men.

Sir ROGER BELMONT, - - - - - - Mr. Fearon.
Sir CHARLES RAYMOND, - - - - - - Mr. Farren.
Young BELMONT, - - - - - - - - Mr. Pope.
Colonel RAYMOND, - - - - - - - - Mr. Macready.
VILLIARD, - - - - - - - - - Mr. Gardner.
FADDLE, - - - - - - - - - Mr. Lewis.

Women.

ROSETTA, - - - - - - - - - - Mrs. Mattocks.
FIDELIA, - - - - - - - - - - Mrs. Merry.

SCENE, *Sir Roger Belmont's House in London.*

THE FOUNDLING.

ACT I. SCENE I.

An Apartment in Sir ROGER BELMONT*'s House. Enter Young* BELMONT *and Colonel* RAYMOND.

Belmont.

MY dear colonel, you are as unlettered in love as I am in war. What, a woman, a fine woman, a coquette, and my sister!—and to be won by whining! Mercy on us! that a well-built fellow, with common sense, should take pains to unman himself, to tempt a warm girl of two-and-twenty to come to bed to him! ——I say, again, and again, colonel, my sister's a woman.

Col. And the very individual woman that I want, Charles.

Bel. And of all women in the world the least fit for thee. An April day is less changeable than her humour. She laughs behind her fan at what she should not understand; calls humility meanness, and blushing the want of education. In all affairs with a man,

she goes by contraries; if you tell her a merry story, she sighs; if a serious one, she laughs; for yes, she says no, and for no, yes; and is mistress of such obedient features, that her looks are always ready to confirm what her tongue utters.

Col. Fine painting, upon my word, and no flattery!

Bel. This is the lady. Now for the lover. A fellow made up of credulity and suspicion; believing where he should doubt, and doubting where he should believe; jealous without cause, and satisfied without proof. A great boy, that has lost his way, and blubbering through every road, but the right, to find his home again; ha, ha, ha!

Col. Mighty florid, indeed, sir!

Bel. Come, come, colonel; love that can exalt the brute to a man, has set you upon all-fours. Women are indeed delicious creatures; but not what you think them. The first wish of every mother's daughter is power, the second mischief: the way to her heart is by indifference, or abuse; for whoever owns her beauty, will feel her tyranny: but if he call her ugly or a fool, she'll set her cap at him, and take pains for his good opinion.

Col. And so, submission and flattery are out of your system?

Bel. For submission and flattery, I substitute impudence and contradiction; these two, well managed, my dear, will do more with beauty in an hour, than fine speeches in a year. Your fine woman expects adoration, and receives it as common incense, which

every fool offers; while the rude fellow, who tells her truth, claims all attention. Difficulty endears conquest. To him only she appears what she should be to all; and while she labours with her natural charms to secure him, she's lost herself.

Col. Why, faith, Charles, there may be some music in these wild notes; but I am so far gone in the old ballad, that I can sing no other words to any tune.

Bel. Ha, ha! Thou poor mournful nightingale in a cage, sing on then; and I'll whistle an upper part with thee, to give a little life to the measure.

Col. That will be kind; for Heaven knows I have need of assistance!——Pr'ythee, tell me, dost think Rosetta wants understanding?

Bel. N——o, faith, I think not.

Col. Good-humour?

Bel. Hum——She's generally pleased.

Col. What then can reconcile her behaviour to me, and her fondness for such a reptile as Faddle? A fellow made up of knavery and noise, with scandal for wit, and impudence for raillery; and so needy, that the very devil might buy him for a single guinea. I say, Charles, what can tempt her even to an acquaintance with this fellow?

Bel. Why, the very understanding and good-humour you speak of. A woman's understanding is design, and her good humour, mischief. Her advances to one fool are made only to tease another.

Col. Sir, your most humble servant.

Bel. And her good-humour is kept alive by the success of her plots.

Col. But why so constant to her fool?

Bel. Because her fool's the fittest for her purpose—He has more tricks than her monkey, more prate than her parrot, more servility than her lap-dog, more lies than her woman, and more wit than her—colonel. And faith, all these things considered, I can't blame my sister for her constancy.

Col. Thou art a wild fellow, and in earnest about nothing but thy own pleasures—and so we'll change the subject. What says Fidelia?

Bel. Why, there, now!—That a man can't instruct another but he must be told, by way of thanks, how much he stands in need of assistance himself!

Col. Any new difficulties?

Bel. Mountains, colonel, a few mountains in my way. But if I want faith to remove them, I hope I shall have strength to climb them, and that will do my business.

Col. She's a woman, Charles.

Bel. By her outside one would guess so; but look a little farther, and, except the stubbornness of her temper, she has nothing feminine about her. She has wit without pertness, beauty without consciousness, pride without insolence, and desire without wantonness. In short, she has every thing——

Col. That you would wish to ruin in her. Why, what a devil are you, Charles, to speak so feelingly of virtues, which you only admire to destroy!

Bel. A very pretty comforter, truly!

Col. Come, come, Charles, if she is as well born as you pretend, what hinders you from cherishing these qualities in a wife, which you would ruin in a mistress?—Marry her, marry her.

Bel. And hang myself in her garters the next morning, to give her virtues the reward of widowhood.—Faith, I must read Pamela twice over first. But suppose her not born as I pretend, but the outcast of a beggar, and obliged to chance for a little education.

Col. Why, then her mind is dignified by her obscurity; and you will have the merit of raising her to a rank which she was meant to adorn. And where's the mighty matter in all this? You want no addition to your fortune, and have only to sacrifice a little unnecessary pride to necessary happiness.

Bel. Very heroical, upon my word!——And so, my dear colonel, one way or other, I must be married, it seems.

Col. If Fidelia can be honest, my life on't, you are of my mind within this fortnight. But, pr'ythee, since I am not to believe your former account of her, who is this delicious girl, that must and will get the better of your pride?

Bel. A sister of the Graces, without mortal father or mother; she dropped from the clouds in her cradle, was lulled by the winds, christened by the rains, fostered by a hag, sold for a whore, sentenced to a rape, and rescued by a rogue—to be ravished by her own consent. There's mystery and hieroglyphic for

you! and every syllable, my dear, a truth, beyond apocrypha.

Col. And what am I to understand by all this?

Bel. Faith, just as much as your understanding can carry. A man in love is not to be trusted with a secret.

Col. And, pray, most discreet sir, is Rosetta acquainted with her real history?

Bel. Not a circumstance. She has been amused like you, and still believes her to be the sister of a dead friend of mine at college bequeathed to my guardianship. But the devil, I find, owes me a grudge for former virtues; for this sister of mine, who dotes upon Fidelia, and believes every thing I have told her of her family and fortune, has very fairly turned the tables upon me.——She talks of equality of birth, forsooth; of virtue, prudence, and good sense; and bids me bless my stars for throwing in my way the only woman in the world that has good qualities enough to redeem my bad ones, and make me, what she says every man ought to be—a good husband.

Col. Was ever poor innocent fellow in such distress!——But what says the old gentleman, your father?

Bel. Why, faith, the certainty of a little money would set him at work the same way——But I'll have one trial of skill with them yet.——As I brought her in by one lie, I'll take her out by another—I'll swear she's a whore—that I may get an opportunity to make her one.

Col. Most religiously resolved, upon my word!

Bel. Between you and me, colonel, has not your old gentleman, Sir Charles, a liquorish look out for Fidelia himself?

Col. No, upon my honour. I believe his assiduities there, are more to prevent the designs of another, than to forward any of his own.

Bel. As who should say, because I have no teeth for a crust, I'll muzzle the young dog that has. A pox of every thing that's old, but a woman!—for 'tis but varying her vocation a little, and you may make her as useful at fifty-five as fifteen. But what say you to a little chat with the girls this morning? I believe we shall find them in the next room.

Col. Not immediately——I have an appointment at White's.

Bel. For half an hour, I am your man there too.—D'ye return so soon?

Col. Sooner, if you will.

Bel. With all my heart. *Allons!* [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

Another Apartment. Enter ROSETTA *and* FIDELIA *meeting.*

Ros. O, my dear! I was just coming to see if you were dressed. You look as if you had pleasant dreams last night.

Fid. Whatever my dreams were, they cann't disturb the morning's happiness, of meeting my dear Rosetta so gay and charming.

Ros. My sweet creature!——But what were your dreams?

Fid. O, nothing—A confusion of gay castles, built by Hope, and thrown down by Disappointment.

Ros. O barbarous!——Well, for my part, I never built a castle in my sleep, that would not last till doomsday. Give me a dream, and I am mistress of the creation. I can do what I will with every man in it—And power, power, my dear, sleeping or waking, is a charming thing!

Fid. Now, in my opinion, a woman has no business with power——Power admits no equal, and dismisses friendship for flattery. Besides, it keeps the men at a distance, and that is not always what we wish.

Ros. But then, my dear, they'll come when we call them, and do what we bid them, and go when we send them——There's something pretty in that, sure ——And for flattery—take my word for't, 'tis the highest proof of a man's esteem—'Tis only allowing what one has not, because the fellow admires what one has—And she that can keep that, need not be afraid of believing she has more.

Fid. Ay, if she can keep that. But the danger is, in giving up the substance for the shadow.——Come, come, my dear, we are weak by nature; and 'tis but knowing that we are so, to be always upon our guard.

Fear may make a woman strong, but confidence undoes her.

Ros. Ha, ha! how different circumstances direct different opinions! You are in love with a rake of a fellow, who makes you afraid of yourself——And I hold in chains a mighty colonel, who's afraid of me. And so, my dear, we both go upon right principles. Your weakness keeps you upon your guard, and my power leaves me without danger.

Fid. And yet you must forgive me, if I tell you, that you love this colonel.

Ros. Who told you so, my dear creature?

Fid. I know it by the pains you take to vex him. Besides, I have seen you look as if you did.

Ros. Look, child!——Why don't I look like other people?

Fid. Ay, like other people in love. Oh, my dear, I have seen just such looks in the glass, when my heart has beat at my very lips.

Ros. Thou art the most provoking creature—

Fid. You must pardon me, Rosetta—I have a heart but little inclined to gaiety; and am rather wondering, that when happiness is in a woman's power, she should neglect it for trifles—or how it should ever enter her thoughts, that the rigour of a mistress can endear the submission of a wife.

Ros. As certain, my dear, as the repentance of a sinner out-weighs in opinion the life of a saint. But, to come to serious confession, I have, besides a woman's inclination to mischief, another reason for keeping off

a little——I am afraid of being thought mercenary.

Fid. Hey day!—why, are you not his equal every way?

Ros. That's not it—I have told you, that before his father's return from exile—You know his unhappy attachments to a successless party——This colonel (brought up in our family, and favoured by Sir Roger and my brother) laid violent siege to me for a whole year. Now, tho' I own I never disliked him, in all that time, either thro' pride, folly, or a little mischief, I never gave him the least hint, by which he could guess at my inclinations.

Fid. Right woman, upon my word!

Ros. 'Tis now about three months, since the king in his goodness recalled Sir Charles; and, by restoring the estate, made the colonel heir to a fortune, more than equal to my expectations. And now, to confess all, the airs that Folly gave me before, Reason bids me continue——for to surrender my heart at once to this new-made commander, would look as if the poor colonel had wanted a bribe for the governor. Besides, he has affronted my pride, in daring to imagine I could descend so low, as to be fond of that creature, Faddle. A fellow, formed only to make one laugh—a cordial for the spleen, to be bought by every body; and just as necessary in a family as a monkey. For which insolence, I must and will be revenged.

Fid. Well, I confess, this looks a little like reason. But, are you sure, all this while, the colonel, in de-

spair, won't raise the siege, and draw off his forces to another place?

Ros. Pshah! I have a better opinion of the men, child. Do but ply them with ill usage, and they are the gentlest creatures in the world. "Like other "beasts of prey, you must tame them by hunger— "but if once you feed them high, they are apt to run "wild, and forget their keepers."

Fid. And are all men so, Rosetta?

Ros. By the gravity of that question, I'll be whipped now, if you don't expect me to say something civil of my brother—Take care of him, Fidelia, "for hunger "can't tame him, nor fulness make him wilder."—— To leave you to his guardianship, was setting the fox to keep the chicken.

Fid. Wild as he is, my heart can never beat to another—And then I have obligations, that would amaze you.

Ros. Obligations!—Let me die, if I would not marry my colonel's papa, and put it out of his power to oblige, or disoblige me.

Fid. Still you banter me with Sir Charles—Upon my life, he has no more designs upon me than you have—I know no reason for his friendship, but his general humanity, or perhaps the singularity of my circumstances.

Ros. Why, as you say, youth and beauty are particular circumstances to move humanity—Ha, ha, ha! —Oh, my dear, time's a great tell-tale, and will dis-

cover all—What a sweet mamma shall I have, when I marry the colonel!

Enter Young BELMONT, *and the* Colonel.

Bel. When you marry the colonel, sister!—A match, a match, child!—Here he is, just in the nick; and, faith as men go, very excellent stuff for a husband.

Col. Those were lucky words, madam.

Ros. Perhaps not so lucky, if you knew all, sir.—Now, or never, for a little lying, Fidelia, if you love me. [*Apart to* Fid.

Fid. I'll warrant you, my dear—You must know, sir, [*To* Bel.] that your sister has taken it into her head, that the colonel's father is my lover.

Ros. What is she going to say now? [*Aside.*

Fid. And as she looks upon herself to be as good as married to the colonel.

Ros. Who I!—I!—

Fid. She has been settling some family affairs with her new mamma here: and, upon my word, she's a sweet contriver.

Ros. And you think I won't be even with you for this, Fidelia?

Bel. Sister!

Col. And was it so, madam?—And may I hope?

Ros. Was it so, madam?—And may I hope? [*Mocking him.*] No, sir, it was not so, and you may not hope.—Do you call this wit, Fidelia?

Fid. My dear creature, you must allow me to laugh a little—Ha, ha, ha!

Ros. 'Tis mighty well, madam—Oh, for a little devil at my elbow now, to help out invention. [*Aside.*

Bel. Ha, ha, ha!—Won't it come, sister?

Ros. As soon as your manners, brother. You and your grave friend there, have been genteelly employed indeed, in listening at the door of a lady's chamber: and then, because you heard nothing for your purpose, to turn my own words to a meaning, I should hate myself for dreaming of.

Bel. Why, indeed, child, we might have perplexed you a little, if Fidelia had not so artfully brought you off.

Ros. Greatly obliged to her, really.

[*Walking in disorder.*

Col. I never knew till now, Rosetta, that I could find a pleasure in your uneasiness.

Ros. And you think, sir, that I shall easily forgive this insolence? But you may be mistaken, sir.

Bel. Poor thing, how it pants! Come, it shall have a husband! We must about it immediately, colonel, for she's all over in a flame.

Ros. You grow impertinent, brother. Is there no relief? [*Aside.*

Bel. Shall I lift up the sash for a little air, child?

Enter Servant.

Ros. So, John!—Have you delivered the card I gave you?

Serv. Yes, madam; and Mr. Faddle desires his compliments to your ladyship, and Madam Fidelia.

Ros. Mr. Faddle, John!——Where did you see him?

Serv. He met me in the street, madam, and made me step into a coffee-house with him, 'till he wrote this, madam. [*Delivers a Letter, and exit.*

Ros. Oh, the kind creature!—Here's a letter from Mr. Faddle, Fidelia!—Fortune, I thank thee for this little respite. [*Aside, and reading the Letter.*

Col. Does she suffer the fool to write to her too?

Fid. What, pining, colonel, in the midst of victory?

Col. To receive his letters, madam!—I shall run mad.

Bel. So!—Away prop, and down scaffold—All's over, I see.

Ros. Oh, Fidelia!—You shall hear it—You shall all hear it—And there's something in't about the colonel too.

Col. About me, madam. [*Peevishly.*

Ros. Nay, colonel, I am not at all angry now. Methinks this letter has made me quite another creature.—To be sure, Mr. Faddle has the most gallant way of writing! But his own words will speak best for him. [*Reads.*

'Dear creature,

Since I saw you yesterday, time has hung upon me like a winter in the country; and unless you appear at rehearsal of the new opera this morning, my sun

will be in total eclipse for two hours. Lady Fanny made us laugh last night, at What's my Thought like, by comparing your colonel to a great box o' the ear—Because it was very rude, she said, and what nobody cared for—I have a thousand things to say, but the clamour of a coffee-house is an interruption to the sentiments of love and veneration, with which I am,

Madam, most unspeakably yours,

WM. FADDLE.'

——Is it not very polite, colonel?

Col. Extremely, madam!—Only a little out as to the box o' the ear: for you shall see him take it, madam, as carelessly as a pinch of snuff.

Ros. Fie, colonel! You would not quarrel before a lady, I hope. Fidelia, you must oblige me with your company to the rehearsal—I'll go put on my capuchin, and step into the coach, this moment.

Fid. I am no friend to public places; but I'll attend you, madam.

Ros. You'll come, colonel?

Col. To be sure, madam.

Bel. Sister!—Oh, you're a good creature!

[*Exit* Rosetta *laughing affectedly.*

Fid. Shall we have your company, sir? [*To* Bel.

Bel. We could find a way to employ time better, child——But I am your shadow, and must move with you every where. [*Exit* Fidelia.]——Ha, ha, ha!——How like a beaten general dost thou look now!——while the enemy is upon the march, to proclaim *Te Deum* for a complete victory.

Col. I am but a man, Charles, and find myself no match for the devil and a woman.

Bel. Courage, boy!—and the flesh and the devil may be subdued—Ha, ha, ha!—Such a colonel!

[*Exit.*

" *Col.* Why this it is to be in love!——Well!—— " Let me but slip my leading-strings!—and if ever I " am a woman's baby again!——

" *To cheat our wishes nature meant the sex,*
" *And form'd them, less to please us, than perplex.*

[Exit."

Act II. Scene I.

Continues. *Enter Sir* Roger Belmont, *and Sir* Charles Raymond.

Sir Roger.

A voracious young dog!—Must I feed ortolans to pamper his gluttony!

Sir Char. Be under no apprehensions, Sir Roger; Mr. Belmont's excesses are mitigated by the levity of youth, and a too early indulgence. In his moments of thinking, I know him generous and noble—And for Fidelia;—I think I can be answerable for her conduct, both in regard to what she owes herself, and you.

Sir Ro. Why, look you, Sir Charles, the girl's a sweet girl, and a good girl—and beauty's a fine thing,

and virtue's a fine thing——But as for marriage!——Why—a man may buy fine things too dear. A little money, Sir Charles, would set off her beauty, and find her virtue employment—But the young rogue does not say a word of that, of late.

Sir Char. Nor of marriage, I am sure——His love of liberty will prevent your fears one way; and, I hope, Fidelia's honour, another.

Sir Ro. Must not have her ruined though!

Sir Char. Fear it not, Sir Roger——And when next you see your son, be a little particular in your enquiries about her family and circumstances—If she is what her behaviour bespeaks her, and he pretends, a lady of birth and fortune—why, secrets are unnecessary: if he declines an explanation, look upon the whole as a contrivance to cover purposes, which we must guard against.

Sir Ro. What, you don't think the rogue has had her, hah, Sir Charles?

Sir Char. No, upon my honour——I hold her innocence to be without stain——But to deal freely with my friend, I look upon her story as strange and improbable.—An orphan, of beauty, family, and fortune; committed by a dying brother to the sole care of a licentious young fellow!—You must pardon me, Sir Roger.

Sir Ro. Pray go on, sir.

Sir Char. Brought in at midnight too!——And then a young creature, so educated, and so irresistibly amiable, to be, in all appearance, without alliance,

friend, or acquaintance in the wide world!——a link, torn off from the general chain!——I say, Sir Roger, this is strange.

Sir Ro. By my troth and so it is!

Sir Char. I know not why I am so interested in this lady's concerns; but yesterday, I indulged my curiosity with her, perhaps, beyond the bounds of good-manners—I gave a loose to my suspicion, and added oaths of secrecy to my enquiries. But her answers only served to multiply my doubts; and still as I persisted, I saw her cheeks covered with blushes, and her eyes swimming in tears——But my life upon't, they were the blushes and the tears of innocence!

Sir Ro. We must and will be satisfied, Sir Charles.

Sir Char. For who knows, while we are delaying, but some unhappy mother, perhaps of rank too, may be wringing her hands in bitterness of misery for this lost daughter.—Girls, who have kept their virtue, Sir Roger, have done mad things for a man they love.

Sir Ro. And so indeed they have——I remember when I was a young fellow myself——But is not that my Charles coming through the hall yonder?

Sir Char. Ay, Sir Roger. Attack him now—But let your enquiries have more the shew of accidental chat than design; for too much earnestness may beget suspicion—And so, sir, I leave you to your discretion. [*Exit.*

Sir Ro. You shall see me again before dinner—— A pox of these young, rakelly rogues!—a girl's worth twenty of them—if one could but manage her.

Enter Young BELMONT, *repeating,*

Bel. No warning of th' approaching flame,
Swiftly like sudden death, it came;
Like mariners, by lightning kill'd,
I burnt the moment———
My dear sir, I have not seen you to-day before!

Sir Ro. What, studying poetry, boy, to help out the year's allowance?

Bel. Faith, sir, times are hard—and unless you come down with a fresh hundred now and then, I may go near to disgrace your family——and turn poet.

Sir Ro. And so want friends all thy life after! But now we talk of money, Charles, what art thou doing with Fidelia's money! I am thinking, that a round sum thrown into the stocks now, might turn to a pretty tolerable account.

Bel. The stocks, sir?

Sir Ro. Ay, boy. My broker will be here after dinner, and he shall have a little chat with thee, about laying out a few of her thousands.

Bel. I hope he'll tell us where we shall get these thousands. [*Aside.*

Sir Ro. Thou dost not answer me, Charles—Art dumb, boy?

Bel. Why, to be sure, sir, as to that——Fidelia——I can't say, but that she may——However, that is, you know, sir——If as to possibility——Will your broker be here after dinner, sir?

Sir Ro. Take a little time, Charles; for, at present, thou dost not make thyself so clearly understood.

Bel. Quite right to be sure, sir—Nothing could, beyond all doubt, be more judicious, or more advantageous—Her interest, sir—why as to that—a pretty fortune—but—did you know her brother, sir?

Sir Ro. Who I, child?——No.

Bel. Faith, nor I neither. [*Aside.*]—Not know Jack, sir?——The rogue would have made you laugh. ——Did I never read you any of his epigrams?—But then he had such an itch for play!—Why he would set you a whole fortune at a cast!—And such a mimic too!—But no œconomy in the world——Why, it cost him a cool six thousand, to stand for member once——Oh, I could tell you such stories of that election, sir——

Sir Ro. Pr'ythee, what borough did he stand for?

Bel. Lord, sir!——He was flung all to nothing—— My Lord What-d'ye-call-um's son carried it fifteen to one, at half the expence——In short, sir, by his extravagance, affairs are so perplexed, so very intricate, that, upon my word, sir, I declare it, I don't know what to think of them——A pox of these questions! [*Aside.*

Sir Ro. But she has friends and relations, Charles: —I fancy, if I knew who they were, something might be done.

Bel. Yes, yes, sir, she has friends and relations— I see, sir, you know nothing of her affairs——Such a string of them!——The only wise thing her brother

ever did, was making me her guardian, to take her out of the reach of those wretches——I shall never forget his last words——Whatever you do, my dear Charles, says he, taking me by the hand, keep that girl from her relations. Why, I would not for a thousand pounds, sir, that any of them should know where she is.

Sir Ro. Why, we have been a little cautious, Charles ——But where does the estate lie?

Bel. Lord, sir!——an estate and no estate——I wonder a man of your knowledge would ask the question.—An earthquake may swallow it for any thing I care.

Sir Ro. But where does it lie, Charles?——In what county, I say?

Bel. And then there's the six thousand pounds, that her father left her——

Sir Ro. What! that gone too, Charles?

Bel. Just as good, I believe—Every shilling on't in a lawyer's hands.

Sir Ro. But she is not afraid to see him too, Charles? ——Where does he live?

Bel. Live, sir!—Do you think such a fellow ought to live?—Why, he has trumpt up a contract of marriage with this girl, sir, under the penalty of her whole fortune—There's a piece of work for you!

Sir Ro. But has he no name, Charles?——What is he called, I say?

Bel. You cann't call him by any name, that's too

bad for him——But if I don't draw his gown over his ears—why say, I am a bad guardian, sir—that's all.

Sir Ro. If this should be apocryphal now?

Bel. Sir?

Sir Ro. A fetch! a fib, Charles!—to conceal some honest man's daughter, that you have stolen, child!

Bel. And brought into a sober family, to have the entire possession of, without lett, or molestation?—Why, what a deal of money have you lavished away, sir, upon the education of a fool?

Sir Ro. There is but that one circumstance to bring thee off—For to be sure, her affairs might have been as well settled in private lodgings——And besides, Charles, a world of troublesome questions, and lying answers, might have been saved.——But take care, boy;——for I may be in the secret before thou art aware on't.——A great rogue, Charles! [*Exit.*

Bel. So! The mine's sprung, I see—and Fidelia has betrayed me. And yet, upon cooler thoughts, she durst not break her word with me; for though she's a woman, the devil has no part in her——Now will I be hanged, if my loving sister is not at the bottom of all this——But if I don't out-plot her!—Let me see!——Ay—Faddle shall be called in—for the fool loves mischief like an old maid; and will out-lie an attorney.

Enter ROSETTA.

Ros. What, musing, brother!—Now would I fain

know, which of all the virtues has been the subject of your contemplations?

Bel. Patience, patience, child—for he that has connection with a woman, let her be wife, mistress, or sister, must have patience.

Ros. The most useful virtue in the world, brother!—and Fidelia shall be your tutoress—I'll hold six to four, that she leads you into the practice on't with more dexterity than the best philosopher in England——She shall teach it, and yet keep the heart without hope, brother.

Bel. Why that's a contrary method to yours, sister;—for you give hope, where you mean to try patience most—and I take it, that you are the abler mistress in the art. Why, every coxcomb in town has been your scholar, child.

Ros. Not to learn patience——there's your mistake now; for it has been my constant practice to put my scholars out of all patience. What are you thinking of, brother?

Bel. Why, I was thinking, child, that 'twould be a question to puzzle a conjurer, what a coquette was made for.

Ros. Am I one, brother?

Bel. Oh, fie, sister!

Ros. Lord! I that am no conjurer, can tell you that——A coquette!——Oh!—Why, a coquette is a sort of beautiful desert in wax-work, that tempts the fool to an entertainment, merely to baulk his appetite.—And will any one tell me that nature had no hand in

the making a coquette, when she answers such wise and necessary purposes?—Now, pray, sir, tell me what a rake was made for?

Bel. Am I one, sister?

Ros. Oh, fie, I roti er!

Bel. Nay, child, if a coquette be so useful in the system of morals, a rake must be the most horrid thing in nature—He was born for her destruction, child—she loses her being at the very sight of him—and drops plump into his arms, like a charmed bird into the mouth of a rattle snake.

Ros. Bless us all!—What a mercy it is, that we are brother and sister!

Bel. Be thankful for't night and morning upon your knees, hussy---for I should certainly have been the ruin of you——But come, Rosetta—'tis allowed then that we are rake and coquette——And now, do you know, that the essential difference between us lies only in two words—petticoat and beeeches.

Ros. Ay, make that out, and you'll do something.

Bel. Pleasure, child, is the business of both—and the same principles that make me a rake, would make you—no better than you should be—were it not for that tax upon the petticoat, called scandal. Your wishes are restrained by fear; mine, authorised by custom: and while you are forced to sit down with the starved comfort of making men fools, I am upon the wing to make girls——women, child.

Ros. Now, as I hope to be married, I would not be a rake for the whole world——unless I were a man;

and then, I do verily believe, I should turn out just such another.

Bel. That's my dear sister!—Give me your hand, child.———Why, now thou art the honestest girl in St. James's parish——and I'll trust thee for the future with all my secrets——I am going to Fidelia, child.

Ro. What a pity 'tis, brother, that she is not such a coquette as I am?

Bel. Not so, neither, my sweet sister; for, faith, the conquest will be too easy to keep a man constant.

Ros. Civil creature!

Bel. But here comes the colonel—Now to our several vocations——You to fooling, and I to business——At dinner we'll meet, and compare notes, child.

Ros. For a pot of coffee, I succeed best.

Bel. Faith, I'm afraid so. [*Exit.*

Enter Colonel RAYMOND.

Col. To meet you alone, madam, is a happiness—

Ros. Pray, colonel, are you a rake? Methinks I would fain have you a rake.

Col. Why so, madam?——'Tis a character I never was fond of.

Ros. Because I am tired of being a coquette---and my brother says, that a rake can transform one, in the flirt of a fan.

Col. I would be any thing, madam, to be better in your opinion.

Ros. If you were a rake now, what would you say to me?

Col. Nothing, madam——I would——

[*Snatches her hand, and kisses it.*

Ros. Bless me!——is the man mad!——I only asked what you would say to me?

Col. I would say, madam, that you are my life, my soul, my angel!——That all my hopes of happiness are built upon your kindness!

Ros. Very well!——keep it up!

Col. That your smiles are brighter than virtue, and your chains sweeter than liberty!

Ros. Upon my word!

Col. Oh, Rosetta!——How can you trifle so with a heart that loves you?

Ros. Very well!——Pathetic too!

"*Col.* Nay, nay, this is carrying the jest too far—"If you knew the situation of my mind, you would "not torture me thus.

"*Ros.* Situation of the mind!——Very geogra-"phical!——Go on!

"*Col.* Pshah!——This is not in your nature.

"*Ros.* Suspicion!——Pretty enough!

"*Col.* You know I have not deserved this.

"*Ros.* Anger too!"——Go on!

Col. No, madam,——Faddle can divert you this way at an easier price.

Ros. And jealousy!——All the vicissitudes of love!——Incomparable!

Col. You will force me to tell you, madam, that I can bear to be your jest no longer.

Ros. Or thus———

Am I the jest of her I love!
Forbid it all the gods above!

——It may be rendered either way——But I am for the rhyme——I love poetry vastly—Don't you love poetry, Colonel?

Col. This is beyond all patience, madam.

[*Very angrily.*

Ros. Bless me!—Why, you have not been in earnest, Colonel?——Lord, Lord, how a-silly woman may be mistaken!

Col. Shall I ask you one serious question, madam?

Ros. Why, I find myself somewhat whimsical this morning—and I don't care if I do take a little stuff—but don't let it be bitter.

Col. Am I to be your fool always, madam, or, like other fools, to be made a husband of, when my time's out?

Ros. Lord, you men-creatures do ask the strangest questions!—Why how can I possibly say now, what I shall do ten years hence?

Col. I am answered, madam. [*Walking in disorder.*

Enter Servant.

Ser. Mr. Faddle, madam. [*Exit.*

Enter FADDLE.

Fad. Oh, my dear, soft toad!——And the colonel,

by all that's scarlet!—Now, pox catch me, if nature ever formed so complete a couple——since the firft pair in Paradise.

Ros. 'Tis well you are come, Faddle—Give me something to laugh at, or I shall die with the spleen.

Col. Ay, sir, make the lady laugh this moment, or I shall break your bones, rascal.

Fad. Lord, colonel!—What!—What!—hah!—

Col. Make her laugh this instant, I say, or I'll make you cry—Not make her laugh, when she bids you!——Why, sirrah!—I have made her laugh this half hour, without bidding.

Ros. Ha, ha, ha!

Fad. Why there, there, there, colonel!—She does, she does, she does!——

Enter Young BELMONT, *and* FIDELIA.

Bel. Why, how now, Faddle!——What has been the matter, pr'ythee?

Col. A rascal!——Not make a lady laugh.

Fad. What, Charles, and my little Fiddy, too!—Stand by me a little——for this robust Colonel has relaxed my very sinews, and quite tremulated my whole system.——I could not have collected myself, without your presence.

Fid. And was he angry with you, Faddle?

Fad. To a degree, my dear——But I have forgot it—I bear no malice to any one in the world, child.

Ros. Do you know, Faddle, that I have a quarrel with you too?

Fad. You, child!—Heh! heh!—What, I am inconstant, I suppose—and have been the ruin of a few families this winter, hah, child?—Murder will out, though it's done in the centre——But come, *vicace!* Let the storm loose——and you shall see me weather it, like the osier in the fable——It may bend, but not break me.

Ros. Nay, it shall come in a breeze——I'll whisper it. [*Whispers* Faddle.

Bel. Colonel!

Col. Now I could cut my throat, for being vexed at this puppy: and yet the devil, jealousy, will have it so. [*Apart to* Belmont.

Fad. Oh, what a creature have you named, child!---Heh, heh, heh!——May grace renounce me, and darkness seal my eye-lids, if I would not as soon make love to a miller's doll.

Bel. Pr'ythee, what mistress has she found out for thee, Faddle?

Fad. By all that's odious, Charles, Miss Gargle, the 'pothecary's daughter: the toad is fond of me, that's positive: but such a mess of water-gruel!---Ugh!——To all purposes of joy, she's an armful of dry shavings! And then she's so jealous of one!---Lord, says she, Mr. Faddle, you are eternally at Sir Roger's; one can't set eyes upon you in a whole day ---Heh, heh! And then the tears do so trickle down those white-wash cheeks of hers, that if she could but warm me to the least fit of the heart-burn,

I believe I should be tempted to take her, by way of chalk and water.---Heh, heh, heh!

Bel. Ros. Fid. Ha, ha, ha!

Ros. Isn't he a pleasant creature, colonel?

Col. Certainly, madam, of infinite wit, with abundance of modesty.

Fad. Pugh!---Pox of modesty, colonel! But do you know, you slim toad you, [*To* Rose.] what a battle I had last night, in a certain company, about you, and that ugly gipsy there?

Fid. Meaning me, sir?

Fad. Pert, and pretty!---You must know, there was Jack Taffety, Billy Cruel, Lord Harry Gymp, and I, at Jack's lodgings, all in tip-top spirits, over a pint of burgundy---a pox of all drinking though! I shall never get it out of my head.---Well, we were toasting a round of beauties, you must know: the girl of your heart, Faddle, says my lord. Rosetta Belmont, my lord, says I---and, faith, down you went, you delicate devil you, in almost half a glass. ---Rot your toast, says my lord, I was fond of her last winter.——She's a wit, says Jack; and a scold, by all that's noisy, says Billy.——Isn't she a little freckled, says my lord? Damnationly padded, says Jack; and painted like a Dutch doll, by Jupiter, says Billy. She's very unsusceptible, says my lord. No more warmth than a snow ball, says Jack.—A mere cold-bath to a lover, curse catch me, says Billy.---Heh, heh, heh! Says I, that's because you want heart to warm her, my dears: to me now, she's all

over combustibles; I can electrify her by a look: touch but her lip, and snap she goes off in a flash of fire.

Ros. Oh, the wretch! what a picture has he drawn of me! [*To* Fidelia.

Fid. You must be curious, my dear.

Bel. Ha, ha! But you forgot Fidelia, Faddle.

Fad. Oh!——And there's the new face, says Billy —Fidelia, I think they call her.——If she was an appurtenance of mine, says my lord, I'd hang her upon a peg in my wardrobe, amongst my cast clothes.—— With those demure looks of hers, says Jack, I'd send her to my aunt in Worcestershire, to set her face by, when she went to church. Or, what think you, says Billy, of keeping her in a show-glass, by way of——gentlemen and ladies, walk in, and see the curiosity of curiosities———the perfect Pamela in high life! Observe, gentlemen, the blushing of her cheeks, the turning up of her eyes, and her tongue, that says nothing but fie! fie!——Ha, ha, ha!—— Incomparable! said all three——Pugh, pox, says I, not so bad as that neither: the little toad has not seen much of the town indeed: but she'll do in time; and a glass of pœniac may serve one's turn, you know, when champaign is not to be had.

[*Bowing to* Rosetta.

All. Ha, ha, ha!

" *Bel.* Why, thou didst give it them, faith, bully.

" *Fid.* I think, Rosetta, we were mighty lucky in " an advocate.

" *Ros.* Prodigious!

" *Fad.* Poor toads!—Oh!—I had forgot: you left " the rehearsal of the new opera this morning in the " most unlucky time! The very moment you were " gone, souse came into the pit, my friend the alder- " man and his fat wife, tricked out in sun-shine: " you must know, I drank chocolate with them in " the morning, and heard all the ceremony of their " proceedings—Sir Barnaby, says my lady, I shall " wear my pink and silver, and my best jewels; and, " d'ye hear? Do you get Betty to tack on your dres- " dens, and let Pompey comb out the white tie, and " bring down the blue coat lined with buff, and the " brown silk breeches, and the gold-headed cane: I " think, as you always wear your coat buttoned, that " green waistcoat may do; but 'tis so besmeared, " that I vow it's a filthy sight with your night-gown " open: and as you go in the coach with me, you " may get your white stockings aired——But you are " determined never to oblige me with a pair of roll- " ups upon these occasions, notwithstanding all " I have said. We are to mix with quality this " morning, Mr. Faddle, and it may be proper to let " them know as how, there are people in the city, " who live of the Westminster side of Wapping. " Your ladyship's perfectly in the right, madam, " says I——[*Stifling a laugh.*] and for fear of a horse- " laugh in her face, slap-dash, I made a leg, and " brushed off like lightning.

" *All.* Ha, ha, ha!"

Enter Servant, and whispers ROSETTA.

Ros. Come, gentlemen, dinner waits——We shall have all your companies, I hope.

Bel. You know, you dine with me at the King's-Arms, Faddle. [*Apart to* Faddle.

Fad. Do I? I am sorry, my dear creature, that a particular appointment robs me of the honour. [*To* Rosetta.

Ros. Pshah! you are always engaged, I think.—Come, Fidelia. [*Exeunt* Rosetta *and* Fidelia.

Col. Why then, thank heaven, there's some respite! [*Exit.*

Bel. Hark you, Faddle; I hope you are not in the least ignorant, that upon particular occasions, you can be a very great rascal?

Fad. Who I, Charles?—Fugh!—Fox!—Is this the dinner I am to have?

Bel. Courage, boy! And because I think so well of thee, there: [*Gives him a purse.*] 'twill buy thee a new laced coat, and a feather.

Fad. Why ay, this is something, Charles. But what am I to do, hah? I won't fight, upon my soul, I won't fight.

Bel. Thou canst lie a little.

Fad. A great deal, Charles, or I have spent my time among women of quality to little purpose.

Bel. I'll tell thee then. This sweet girl, this angel, this stubborn Fidelia, sticks so at my heart, that I must either get the better of her, or run mad.

Fad. And so thou wouldst have me aiding and abetting, hah, Charles? Must not be tucked up for a rape neither.

Bel. Peace, fool! About three months ago, by a very extrordinary adventure, this lady dropped into my arms. It happened that our hearts took fire at first sight—But as the devil would have it, in the hurry of my first thoughts, not knowing where to place her, I was tempted, for security, to bring her to this haunted house here, where, between the jealousy of Sir Charles, the gravity of the colonel, the curiosity of a sister, and the awkward care of a father, she must become a vestal, or I—a husband.

Fad. And so, by way of a little simple fornication, you want to remove her to private lodgings, hah, Charles?

Bel. But how, how, how—thou dear rascal?

Fad. Let me see——Hum——And so, you are not her guardian, Charles?

Bel. Nor she the woman she pretends, boy——I tell thee, she was mine by fortune——I tilted for her at midnight——But the devil tempted me, I say, to bring her hither——The family was in bed, which gave me time for contrivance——I prevailed upon her to call me guardian——that by pretending authority over her, I might remove her at pleasure ——But here too I was deceived——My sister's fondness for her has rendered every plot of mine to part them impracticable——And without thy wicked assistance we must both die in our virginity.

Fad. Hum! That would be a pity, Charles——— But let me see——Ay——I have it.——Within these three hours, we'll contrive to set the house in such a flame, that the devil himself may take her——if he stand at the street-door———To dinner, to dinner, boy! 'Tis here, here, here, Charles!

Bel. If thou dost——

Fad. And if I don't———why no more purses, Charles.———I tell thee, 'tis here, here, boy! To dinner, to dinner! [*Exeunt.*

ACT III. SCENE I.

Continues. *Enter* ROSETTA *and* FIDELIA.

Fidelia.

'Tis all your own doing, my dear. You first tease him into madness, and then wonder to hear his chains rattle.

Ros. And yet how one of my heavenly smiles sobered him again!

Fid. If I were a man, you should use me so but once, Rosetta.

Ros. Pshah!—If you were a man, you would do as men do, child——Ha, ha, ha!——They are creatures of robust constitutions, and will bear a great deal——Besides, for my part, I cann't see what a reasonable fellow ought to expect before marriage, but ill usage. ———You can't imagine, my dear, how it sweetens kindnesss afterwards———"'Tis bringing a poor

" starved creature to a warm fire, after a whole night's
" wandering through frost and snow.

" *Fid.* But, to carry on the image, my dear—won't
" he be apt to curse the tongue that misguided him;
" and take up with the first fire he meets with, rather
" than perish in the cold?————I could sing you a
" song, Rosetta, that one would swear was made o'
" purpose for you.

" *Ros.* O, pray let me hear it.

SONG *by* Fidelia.

" *For a shape, and a bloom, and an air, and a mien,*
" *Myrtilla was brightest of all the gay green;*
" *But artfully wild, and affectedly coy,*
" *Those her beauties invited, her pride would destroy.*

" *By the flocks as she stray'd with the nymphs of the vale,*
" *Not a shepherd but woo'd her to hear his soft tale;*
" *Tho' fatal the passion, she laugh'd at the swain,*
" *And, return'd with neglect, what she heard with disdain.*

" *But beauty has wings, and too hastily flies,*
" *And love unrewarded soon sickens and dies.*
" *The nymph, cur'd by time, of her folly and pride,*
" *Now sighs in her turn for the bliss she deny'd.*

" *No longer she frolics it wide o'er the plain,*
" *To kill with her coyness the languishing swain;*
" *So humbled her pride is, so soften'd her mind,*
" *That, tho' courted by none, she to all would be kind.*

" *Ros.* Pshah!——there's a song indeed!——You " should sing of men's perjuries, my dear----of kind " nymphs, and cloy'd shepherds"———For, take my word for't, there's no charm like cruelty, to keep the men constant; nor no deformity like kindness, to make them loath you.

Enter Servant.

Serv. A letter for your ladyship, madam. [*Exit.*

Ros. For me? I don't remember the hand.

[*Opens and reads the letter to herself.*

Fid. " I have a little inclination to be cheerful, tho' " I sing songs, and prattle thro' the whole day—Bel- " mont! Belmont! [*Aside.*]" You seem strangely concerned, madam——I hope no ill news.

Ros. The worst in the world, Fidelia, if it be true.

Fid. Pray Heaven it be false then!——But must it be a secret?——I hope, my dear Rosetta knows, that whatever affects her quiet, can't leave mine undisturbed.

Ros. Who's there?

Enter Servant.

How did you receive this letter?

Serv. From a porter, madam.

Ros. Is he without?

Serv. No, madam; he said it required no answer.

Ros. Had you any knowledge of him?

Serv. Not that I remember, madam.

Ros. Should you know him again?

Serv. Certainly, madam.

Ros. Where did my brother say he dined to-day?

Serv. At the King's-Arms, madam.

Ros. And Mr. Faddle with him?

Serv. They went out together, madam.

Ros. Run this moment, and say I desire to speak with both of them immediately, upon an extraordinary affair.

Serv. Yes, madam. [*Exit.*

Fid. What can this mean, Rosetta?——Am I unfit to be trusted?

Ros. Tell me, Fidelia—But no matter—Why should I disturb you?—I have been too grave.

Fid. Still more and more perplexing!——But my enquiries are at an end—I shall learn to be less troublesome, as you are less kind, Rosetta.

Ros. Pr'ythee don't talk so, Fidelia——I can never be less kind,

Fid. Indeed, I won't deserve you should.

Ros. I know it, Fidelia.—But tell me then—Is there a circumstance in your life, that would call a blush to your cheeks, if 'twere laid as open to the world's knowledge, as to your own?

Fid. If from the letter you ask me that strange question, madam, surely I should see it.

Ros. I think not, Fidelia———For, upon second thoughts, 'tis a trifle, not worth your notice.

Fid. Why were you so much alarmed then?

Ros. I confess, it startled me at first—But 'tis a lying letter and should not trouble you.

Fid. Then it relates to me, madam?

Ros. No matter, Fidelia.

Fid. I have lost my friend, then——I begged at first, to be a sharer in Rosetta's griefs——but now I find they are all my own, and she denies my right to them.

Ros. This is too much, Fidelia——And now to keep you longer in suspense would be cruelty.——But the writer of this scroll has a mind darker than night.—You shall join with me in wondering, that there is such a monster in the world. [*Reads.*

'*To Miss* Rosetta Belmont.

'Madam,

'As I write without a name, I am alike indifferent to your thanks or resentment.—Fidelia is not what she seems—She has deceived you, and may your brother, to his ruin. Women of the town know how to wear the face of innocence, when it serves the purposes of guilt.——Faddle, if he pleases can inform you farther—But be assured, I have my intelligence from more sufficient authority.

'P. S. There needs no farther address in this matter, than a plain question to Fidelia—Is she the sister of Mr. Belmont's friend?'

Fid. Then I am lost! [*Aside.*

Ros. What, in tears, Fidelia?——Nay, I meant to raise your contempt only——Pr'ythee, look up, and let us laugh at the malice of this nameless libeller.

Fid. No, Rosetta——The mind must be wrapt in

its own innocence that can stand against the storms of malice——I fear I have not that mind.

Ros. What mind, Fidelia?

Fid. And yet that letter is a false one.

Ros. Upon my life, it is——For you are innocence itself.

Fid. Oh, Rosetta!——No sister of Mr. Belmont's friend kneels to you for pardon—but a poor wretched out-cast of fortune, that with an artful tale has imposed upon your nature, and won you to a friendship for a helpless stranger that never knew herself.

Ros. Rise, Fidelia—But take care!—For if you have deceived me, honesty is nothing but a name.

Fid. Think not too hardly of me neither—For tho' I am not what I seem, I would not be what that letter calls me, to be mistress of the world.

Ros. I have no words, Fidelia—Speak on——But methinks you should not weep so.

Fid. Nay, now, Rosetta, you compel me—For this gentleness is too much for me—I have deceived you, and you are kind——If you would dry up my tears, call forth your resentment——Anger might turn me into stone—but compassion melts me.

Ros. I have no anger, Fidelia——Pray go on.

Fid. When my tears will let me——I have played a foolish game, Rosetta——and yet my utmost fault has been consenting to deceive you.—What I am, I know not——That I am not what I seem, I know.——But

why I have seemed otherwise than I am, again I know not.——'Tis a riddle that your brother only can explain.——He knows the story of my life, and will in honour reveal it. Would he were here!

Ros. Would he were, Fidelia!—for I am upon the rack—Pr'ythee go on, and inform me farther.

Fid. There's my grief, Rosetta—For I am bound by such promises to silence, that, to clear my innocence, would be to wound it.———All I have left to say, is, that my condition of life only has been assumed, my virtue never.

Enter Servant.

Ros. Well, sir!

Serv. Mr. Belmont, madam, was just gone: but Mr. Faddle will wait upon your ladyship immediately.

Ros. Did they say where my brother went?

Serv. They did not know-——Mr. Faddle is here, madam. [*Exit.*

Enter FADDLE, *humming a tune.*

Fad. In obedience to your extrordinary commands, madam———But you should have been alone, child.

Ros. No trifling, sir——Do you know this handwriting? [*Gives him the letter.*

Fad. Hum!——Not I, as I hope to be saved——Nor you neither, I believe. [*Aside.*] Is it for my perusal, madam?

Fid. And your answering too, sir.

Fad. Mighty well, madam. [*Reads.*] Hum!—Fidelia—Women—of the town—Innocence—Guilt—Faddle inform you farther!———Why, what a pox am I brought in for?———Intelligence—Question—Fidelia——Sister of Mr. Belmont's friend.

[*Stares and whistles.*

Ros. Well, sir! [*Takes the letter.*

Fad. Oh!—I am to guess at the writer——Cann't upon my soul——Upon my soul I cann't, child——'Tis a woman, I believe tho', by the damned blabbing that's in't.

Fid. The letter says, sir, that you can inform this lady farther concerning me.——Now, sir, whatever you happen to know, or to have heard of me, deliver it freely, and without disguise.———I entreat it, as an act of friendship, that will for ever oblige me.

Fad. Let me see———No———It cann't be her neither——She is a woman of too much honour—and yet, I don't remember to have opened my lips about it, to any soul but her.

Fid. You know me then, sir?

Ros. Speak out, sir.

Fad. Methinks, if these letter-writers were a little more communicative of their own names, and less so of their neighbours, there would be more honesty in them.—Why am I introduced here!—Truly, forsooth, because a certain person in the world is overburthened with the secrets of her own slips, and for a little vent, chooses to blab those of another—Faddle inform you farther!—Faddle will be damned as soon.

Ros. Hark you, sir—If you intend to enter these doors again, tell me all you know, for I will have it. You have owned your telling it elsewhere, sir.

Fid. What is it you told, sir?

Fad. What I sha'n't tell here, madam. Her angry ladyship must excuse me, faith.

Ros. 'Tis very well, sir!

Fid. Indeed, Rosetta, he knows nothing.

Fad. Nothing in the world, madam, as I hope to be saved. Mine is all hearsay. And, curse upon them! the whole town may be in a lie, for any thing I know. So they said of Lady Bridget, that she went off with her footman; but 'twas all slander, for 'twas a horse grenadier, that she bought a commission for last week.

Ros. What has Lady Bridget, or the town, to do with Fidelia, sir?

Fad. So I said, madam—the very words. Says I, a woman of the town? Does a slip or two with particulars make a lady a woman of the town? Or if it did, says I, many a one has taken up, and lived honestly afterwards. A woman of the town indeed!

Fid. Hold your licentious tongue, sir! Upon my life, Rosetta, 'tis all malice. 'Tis his own contrivance. I dare him to produce another villain, that's base enough to say this of me.

Fad. Right, madam! Stick to that, and 'egad, I'll be of your side. [*Aloud in her ear.*

Fid. Insolence! [*Strikes him.*] Oh, I am hurt beyond all bearing!

Ros. And I, lost in perplexity. If thou art linked with any wretch base enough to contrive this paper, or art thyself the contriver, may poverty and a bad heart be thy companions: but if thou art privy to any thing, that concerns the honour of this family, give it breath, and I'll insure thee both protection and reward.

Fid. I dare him to discovery.

Fad. Ladies, I have had the honour of a blow conferred on me by one of you, and am favoured with the offer of protection and reward from the other; now to convince both, that, in spite of indignities, or obligations, I can keep a secret, if ever I open my lips upon this matter, may plague, famine, and the horned devil consume and seize me. And so, ladies, I take my leave. [*Exit singing.*

Ros. What can this fellow mean, Fidelia! Has he not abused you?

Fid. Is it a doubt then? Would I had leave to speak!

Ros. And why not, Fidelia? Promises unjustly extorted, have no right to observance. You have deceived me by your own acknowledgment, and methinks, at such a time, matters of punctilio should give place to reason and necessity.

Fid. I dare not, Rosetta. 'Twould be a crime to your brother, and I owe him more than all the world.

Ros. And what are those obligations, Fidelia?

Fid. Not for me to mention. Indeed, I dare not, Rosetta.

Ros. 'Tis well, madam! And when you are inclined to admit me to your confidence, I shall perhaps know better how to conduct myself. [*Going.*

Enter Young BELMONT, *meeting her.*

Oh, are you come, brother! Your friend's sister, your ward there, has wanted you, sir.

Bel. What is it, Fidelia?

Fid. I have no breath to speak it. Your sister, sir, can better inform you.

Ros. Read that, sir.

[*Gives him the letter, which he reads to himself.*

Fid. Now, Rosetta, all shall be set right. Your brother will do me justice, and account for his own conduct.

Ros. I expect so, Fidelia.

Bel. Impertinent! [*Gives back the letter.*] I met Faddle as I came in, and I suppose in pure love of mischief, he has made my believing sister here, a convert to the villany of that letter. But I'll make the rascal unsay every thing he has said, or his bones shall ache for't. [*Going.*

Fid. Stay, sir, I entreat you. That I am a counterfeit, in part, I have already confessed——

Bel. You have done wrong then.

Fid. But am I a creature of the town, sir? Your sister must learn that from you. You have been once my deliverer—be so now. Tell her, I am poor and miserable, but not dishonest. That I have only consented to deceive her, not desired it. Tell her, I de-

serve her pity, not her anger. 'Tis my only request. Can you deny it me?

Bel. You have said too much, Fidelia. And for your own sake, I shall forbear to mention what I know of your story. How far your own honour is bound, you are the best judge. But a breach of the most solemn promises, let me tell you, madam, will be a wretched vindication of the innocence you contend for.

Fid. And is this all, sir?

Bel. For my own part, I must have better authority than Faddle, or a nameless writer, to believe anything to your dishonour. And for you, sister, I must not have this lady ill-treated. While I am satisfied of her innocence your suspicions are impertinent. Nor will I consent to her removal, madam, mark that, whatever you, in your great wisdom, may have privately determined. [*Exit.*

Ros. You are a villain, brother.

Fid. Now I have lost you, Rosetta!

Ros. When you incline to be a friend to yourself, Fidelia, you may find one in me. But while explanations are avoided, I must be allowed to act from my own opinion, and agreeable to the character I am to support. [*Exit.*

Fid. Then I am wretched! But that's no novelty. I have wandered from my cradle, the very child of misfortune. To retire and weep, must now be my only indulgence. [*Exit.*

Enter BELMONT.

Bel. Why, what a rogue am I! Here have I thrown a whole family, and that my own too, into perplexities, that innocence can't oppose, nor cunning guard against. And all for what? Why, a woman—Take away that excuse, and the devil himself would be a a saint to me; for all the rest is sinning without temptation. In my commerce with the world, I am guarded against the mercenary vices.—I think, I have honour above lying, courage above cruelty, pride above meanness, and honesty above deceit; and yet, throw but coy beauty in my way, and all the vices, by turns, take possession of me. Fortune, Fortune, give me success this once——and I'll build churches!

Enter FADDLE.

Fad. What, Charles—Is the coast clear, and the finishing stroke given to my embassy, hah?

Bel. Thou hast been a most excellent rascal, and faith, matters seem to be in a promising condition. For I have flung that in Rosetta's way, which if she keeps her womanhood, will do the business.

Fad. Pr'ythee, what's that, Charles?

Bel. Why, I have bid her not to think of parting with Fidelia.

Fad. Nay, then, tip she goes headlong out at window. But hast thou no bowels, Charles? for, me-

thinks, I begin to feel some twitches of compunction about me.

Bel. I understand you, sir; but I have no more purses.

Fad. Why, look you, Charles, we must find a way to lull this conscience of mine—here will be the devil to do else. That's a very pretty ring, Charles.

Bel. Is it so, sir? Hark you, Mr. Dog, if you demur one moment to fetching and carrying in this business, as I bid you, you shall find my hand a little heavy upon you.

Fad. Pugh, pox, Charles! can't a body speak? People may be in good-humour, when they want people to do things for people, methinks.

Bel. Troop this moment, with your rascally conscience to the King's Arms, and wait there till I come, sir.

Fad. Why so I will, Charles——A pox of the swaggering son of a——Not so big neither, if one had but a little courage. [*Aside and going.*

Bel. Hark you, Faddle—Now I think on't, there is a way yet for thee to make another purse out of this business.

Fad. Why, one would not be a rogue for nothing, methinks.

Bel. I saw Sir Charles going into Fidelia's chamber—thou mayest steal upon them unobserved—they'll have their plots too, I suppose.

Fad. And where am I to come and tell thee, hah?

Bel. At the King's Arms, boy.

Fad. But you'll remember the purse, Charles.

Bel. Softly, rascal! [*Exit* Fad.] Why there it is again now! I am a fellow of principle! and so I will be, some time or other. But these appetites are the devil, and at present I am under their direction.

[*Exit.*

SCENE II.

Another Apartment. *Sir* CHARLES *and* FIDELIA *discovered sitting.*

Sir Char. He durst not say, directly, you were that creature the letter called you!

Fid. Not in terms, sir; but his concealments struck deeper than the sharpest accusations.

Sir Char. And could Mr. Belmont be silent to all this?

Fid. He said he had his reasons, sir, and it was my part to submit. I had no heart to disoblige him.

Sir Char. You are too nice, madam. Rosetta loves you, and should be trusted.

Fid. Alas, sir! if it concerned me only, I should have no concealment.

Sir Char. It concerns you most, madam. I must deal plainly with you. You have deceived your friend; and tho' I believe it not, a severer reproach rests upon you. And shall an idle promise, an extorted one too, and that from a man who solicits your

undoing, forbid your vindication? You must think better of it.

Fid. 'Tis not an extorted promise, sir, that seals my lips—but I love him—and tho' he pursues me to my ruin, I will obey him in this, whatever happens. He may desert me, but never shall have reason to upbraid me.

Sir Char. 'Tis your own cause, madam, and you must act in it as you think proper. Yet still, if I might advise———

Fid. Leave it to time, Sir Charles. And if you believe me innocent, your friendly thoughts of me, and my own conscience, shall keep me cheerful.

Enter FADDLE, *listening.*

Fad. O, pox, is it so! Now for a secret worth twenty pieces!

Sir Char. Has it ever appeared to you, madam, that Faddle was a confidant of Mr. Belmont's?

Fid. Never, sir. On the contrary, a wretch most heartily despised by him.

Fad. If she should be a little mistaken now. [*Aside.*

Sir Char. Can you guess at any other means of his coming to a knowledge of you?

Fid. None that I know of, sir.

Fad. Faith, I believe her. [*Aside.*

Sir Char. One question more, madam, and I have done. Did Mr. Belmont ever solicit your removing from this house?

Fid. Never directly, sir. He has often, when we have been alone, quarrelled with himself for bringing me into it.

Sir Char. I thank you, madam. And if my enquiries have been at any time too importunate, allow them to the warmth of an honest friendship: for I have a heart that feels for your distresses, and beats to relieve them.

Fid. I have no words, Sir Charles; let my tears thank you.

Sir Char. Be composed, my child. And if Rosetta's suspicions grow violent, I have apartments ready to receive you, with such welcome, as virtue should find with one who loves it.

Fid. Still, Sir Charles, my tears are all that I can thank you with——for this goodness is too much for me.

Fad. And so she's a bit for the old gentleman at last! Rare news for Charles! or with a little addition I shall make it so. But I must decamp, to avoid danger. [*Aside, and exit.*

Sir Char. Dry up your tears, Fidelia. For, if my conjectures are well grounded, before night, perhaps, something may be done to serve you. And so I leave you to your best thoughts. [*Exit.*

Fid. Then I have one friend left. How long I am to hold him, Heaven knows. 'Tis a fickle world, and nothing in it is lasting, but misfortune——yet I'll have patience;

That sweet relief, the healing hand of Heav'n
Alone to suff'ring innocence has giv'n;
Come, friend of virtue, balm of every care,
Dwell in my bosom, and forbid despair. [Exit.

ACT IV. SCENE I.

An Apartment. Enter Colonel *and* ROSETTA.

Rosetta.

I tell you, I will not be talked to.

Col. 'Tis my unhappiness, madam, to raise no passion in you, but anger.

Ros. You are mistaken, colonel. I am not angry, tho' I answer so. My gaiety has been disturbed to-day; and gravity always sits upon me like ill-humour. Fidelia has engrossed me, and you are talking of yourself. What would you have me say?

Col. That your neglect of me has been dissembled, and that I have leave to love you, and to hope for you.

Ros. This is very strange now! Why 'tis not in your power to avoid loving me, whether you have leave to hope or not. And as to my dissembling, I know nothing of that—all I know is, that I'm a woman, and women, I suppose, dissemble sometimes—I don't pretend to be a bit better than a woman.

Col. Be a kind one, and you're an angel.

Ros. Why there now! when if I wanted to be an angel, the very kindness that made me one, would leave me in a month or two, a mere forsaken woman. No, no, colonel! ignorance is the mother of love, as well as devotion. We are angels before you know us to be women, and less than women, when, you know us to be no angels. If you would be pleased with the tricks of a juggler, never enquire how they are done.

Col. Right, madam, where the entertainment consists only in the deceit.

Ros. And philosophers will tell you, that the only happiness of life is to be well deceived.

Col. 'Tis the philosophy of fools, madam. Is the pleasure that arises from virtue a cheat? Or is there no happiness in conferring obligations, where the receiver wishes to be obliged, and labours to return? 'Tis the happiness of divinity, to distribute good, and be paid with gratitude.

Ros. But to give all at once, would be to lose the power of obliging.

Col. And to deny all, would be to lose the pleasure of obliging.

Ros. But where the gift is trifling, you know——

Col. That trifle, if lent to another's management, might make both rich.

Ros. This is playing at cross-purposes. But if I were inclined to listen, what have you to say in favour of matrimony?

Col. "To fools, madam, 'tis the jewel of Æsop's

" cock; but to the wise, a diamond of price, in a " skilful hand, to enrich life." 'Tis happiness, or misery, as minds are differently disposed. The necessary requisites are love, good sense, and good breeding. The first to unite, the second to advise, and the third to comply. If you add to these, neatness and a competency, beauty will always please, and family cares become agreeable amusements.

" *Ros.* And yet I have known a very miserable " couple, with all these requisites.

" *Col.* Never, if you'll believe me, Rosetta—They " have worn them in public, and may have dissem- " bled with success. But marriage-intimacies de- " stroy dissimulation.——And if their private hours " have known no enjoyment, there must have been " wanting, either the affection that should unite, the " understanding that should advise, or the compla- " cency that should oblige."

Ros. Do you know, now, that you never pleased me so much in all your life?

Col. If so, Rosetta, one question, and then to apply.

Ros. How if I should not answer your question?

Col. 'Tis a fair one, upon my word. Don't you think, that you and I could muster up these requisites between us?

Ros. Let me consider a little——Who must have love, pray?

Col. Both of us.

Ros. No, I have no mind to have any thing to do

with love. Do you take that, and give understanding, to advise. "So then you choose again, and have "all the good-breeding, for compliance; then I "neatness; and last of all, competency shall be divided between us."

Col. A match, madam, upon your own terms.—— "But if ever you should take it into your head to "dispute love with me, what other requisite are "you willing to give up for it?

"*Ros.* Why, neatness, I think; 'tis of little use to "a married woman, you know.

"*Col.* A trifle, madam." But when are we to come together?

Ros. As soon as we can give proof that these ingredients are between us—In a few years, perhaps.

Col. If our virtues should starve in that time?

Ros. Psha!—You know nothing of the matter. Sense will improve every day, and love and good-breeding live an age, if we don't marry then. But we'll have done with these matters; for I can keep the ball up no longer. You did not say Fidelia upbraided me?

Col. The very reverse. 'Twas her only affliction, she said, that you had reason to think hardly of her.

Ros. Poor girl! If you would make love to me with success, colonel, clear up these perplexities.—Suppose I was to dismiss my pride a little, and make her a visit with you?

Col. 'Twould be a kind one.

Ros. Lead on then; for, in spite of my resentments, I have no heart to keep from her. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

Another Apartment. Enter Young BELMONT *and* FADDLE.

Bel. If this should be invention, Faddle?

Fad. I tell thee, I was behind the screen, and heard every syllable on't. Why, I'll say it to his face, pr'ythee.

Bel. What, that he proposed to take her into keeping, and that she consented?

Fad. Not in those words, man—No, no, Sir Charles is a gentleman of politer elocution. Pray, child, says he, did Young Belmont ever propose your removing from this house? No, sir, says she, but he has cursed himself to damnation for bringing me into it. [*Mimicking* Sir Charles *and* Fidelia.] Well, child, says he, the thing may be done to night; apartments are ready for you. And then, in a lower voice, he said something about virtue, that I could not very well hear; but I saw it set the girl a crying. And presently, in answer to a whisper of his, I heard her say, in a very pretty manner, that she thought it was too much for her. But what his proposals were, the devil a syllable could I hear.

Bel. Ha, ha!—Yonder he is, Faddle, and coming this way. We must not be seen together.

Fad. For a little sport, Charles, suppose I fling myself in his way, and make interest to be commode to him, ha!

Bel. And get thy nose twisted for thy pains?

Fad. Why, I can run, if I can't fight, pr'ythee.

Bel. Faith, I never doubted thee that way. I'll to my room, then, and wait for thee.

Fad. But leave the door open, Charles.

Bel. Ha, ha, ha!—You'll not be tedious, sir. [*Exit.*

Enter Sir CHARLES.

Fad. If the old gentleman should be in his airs tho'—Servant, servant, Sir Charles.

Sir Char. Oh, sir, you are the man I was looking for!

Fad. If I can be of any service, Sir Charles——What, and so—ha!——Faith, you're a sly one—But you old poachers have such a way with you?—Why here has Charles been racking his brains for ways and means, any time these three months; and just in the nick, souse comes me down the old kite—and, alack-a-day, poor chick!—the business is done.

Sir Char. Make yourself a little intelligible, sir.

Fad. And so, I don't speak plain, ha?—Oh, the little rogue!—There's more beauty in the veins of her neck, than in a landscape of Claude; and more music in the smack of her lips, than in all Handel!

Sir Char. Let me understand you, sir.

Fad. Methinks 'twas very laconic, tho'——If Rosetta's suspicions grow violent, I have apartments

ready to receive you [*Mimicking Sir* Charles.] But a word in your ear, old gentleman—Those apartments won't do.

Sir Char. Oh, sir, I begin to be a little in the secret!

Fad. Mighty quick of apprehension, faith!—And the little innocent!——Still, Sir Charles, my tears are all that I can thank you with; for this goodness is too much for me. [*Mimicking* Fidelia.] Upon my soul, you have a great deal of goodness, Sir Charles; a great deal of goodness, upon my soul.

Sir Char. Why, now I understand you, sir. And as these matters may require time, for the sake of privacy we'll shut this door. [*Shuts the door.*

Fad. Any other time, Sir Charles. But I am really so hurried at present, that—Oh, lord! [*Aside.*

Sir Char. Why, what does the wretch tremble at? —Broken bones are to be set again; and thou mayest yet die in thy bed. [*Takes hold of him.*] You have been a listener, sir.

Fad. Lord, sir!—Indeed, sir!—Not I, sir!

Sir Char. No denial, sir. [*Shakes him.*

Fad. Oh, sir, I'll confess! I did listen, sir——I did, indeed, sir.

Sir Char. Does your memory furnish you with any other villany of yours, that may save me the trouble of an explanation?

Fad. I'll think, sir——What the devil shall I say now? [*Aside.*

Sir Char. Take care; for every lie thou tellest me, shall be scored ten-fold upon thy flesh. Answer me

——How came Mr. Belmont's sister by that anonymous letter?

Fad. Letter, sir!

Sir Char. Whence came it, I say?

Fad. Is there no remission, sir?

Sir Char. None that thou canst deserve: for honesty is not in thy nature.

Fad. If I confess?

Sir Char. Do so then, and trust me.

Fad. Yes, and so be beat to mummy by Charles—If you won't tell him, sir——

Sir Char. I'll think on't.

Fad. Why then, sir——But he'll certainly be the death of me——It was by his contrivance I wrote the letter, and sent it from the King's Arms.

Sir Cha. Very well, sir. And did you know to what purpose it was sent?

Fad. Yes, sir; it was to alarm the family against Fidelia, that Charles might get her into private lodgings——That was all, as I hope to be sav'd, sir.

Sir Char. Was it, sir? And upon what principles were you an accomplice in this villany?

Fad. I was out of money, sir, and not over-valiant; and Charles promised and threatened—'Twas either a small purse, or a great cudgel—And so, I took one to avoid t'other, sir.

Sir Char. And what dost thou deserve for this?

Fad. Pray, sir, consider my honest confession, and think me paid already, if you please, sir.

Sir Char. For that thou art safe. If thou wouldst continue so, avoid me. Begone, I say!

Fad. Yes, sir——and well off too, faith.

[*Aside, and going.*

Sir Char. Yet stay—If thou art open to any sense of shame, hear me.

Fad. I will, sir.

Sir Char. Thy life is a disgrace to humanity. A foolish prodigality makes thee needy; need makes thee vicious, and both make thee contemptible. Thy wit is prostituted to slander and buffoonery; and thy judgments, if thou hast any, to meanness and villany. Thy betters that laugh with thee, laugh at thee: and who are they? The fools of quality at court, and those who ape them in the city. The varieties of thy life are pitiful rewards, and painful abuses; for the same trick that gets thee a guinea to-day, shall get thee beaten out of doors to-morrow. Those who caress thee are enemies to themselves; and when they know it, will be so to thee: in thy distresses they'll desert thee, and leave thee, at last, to sink in thy poverty, unregarded and unpitied. If thou canst be wise, think of me, and be honest. [*Exit.*

Fad. I'll endeavour it, sir——A most excellent discourse, faith; and mighty well there was not a larger congregation.——So, so!—I must be witty, with a vengeance!——What the devil shall I say to Charles, now?—And here he comes, like poverty and the plague, to destroy me at once——Let me see——

Ay—as truth has saved me with one, I'll try what a little lying will do with t'other.

Enter Young BELMONT.

Ha, ha, ha! Oh, the rarest sport, Charles!

Bel. What sport, pr'ythee?

Fad. I shall burst!——Ha, ha, ha!——The old gentleman has let me into all his secrets.

Bel. And, like a faithful confidant, you are going to reveal them.

Fad. Not a breath, Charles—Only that I am in commission, my dear, that's all.

Bel So I suppose, indeed.

Fad. Nay, Charles, if I tell thee a lie, cut my throat. The short of the matter is, the old poacher, finding me in the secret, thought it the wisest way to make a confidant of me; and this very moment, my dear, I am upon the wing to provide lodgings for the occasion.

Bel. If this should be apocryphal, as my father says——

Fad. Gospel every syllable, as I hope to be saved ——Why, what in the devil's name have I to do, to be inventing lies for thee?——But here comes the old gentleman again, faith—Oh, the devil! [*Aside.*]—Pr'ythee, stroke him down a little, Charles, if 'tis only to see how awkward he takes it—I must about the lodgings, ha, ha, ha!——But if ever I set foot in this house again, may a horse-pond be my portion.

[*Aside, and exit.*

Enter Sir CHARLES, *with a Letter in his Hand, speaking to a Servant.*

Sir Char. Bid him wait a little, and I'll attend him. [*Exit Servant.*] What can this mean?—Let me read it again. [*Reads.*] 'If the interest of Sir Charles Raymond's family be dear to him, he will follow the bearer with the same haste that he would shun ruin.' ——That he would shun ruin! This is strange! But, be it as it will, I have another concern that must take place first.

Bel. Sir Charles, your servant. Any news, sir?

Sir Char. Not much, sir; only, that a young gentleman of honour and condition had introduced a virtuous lady to his family; and when a worthless fellow defamed her innocence, and robbed her of her quiet, he, who might have dried her tears, and vindicated her virtue, forsook her in her injuries, to debauch his mind with the assassin of her reputation.

Bel. If your tale ends there, sir, you have learned but half on't; for my advices add, that a certain elderly gentleman, of title and fortune, pitying the forlorn circumstances of the lady, has offered her terms of friendship and accommodation: and this night she bids farewell to maidenhood, and a female bedfellow in private apartments.

Sir Char. You treat me lightly, Mr. Belmont.

Bel. You use me roughly, Sir Charles.

Sir Char. How, sir?

Bel. In the person of Fidelia.

Sir Char. Make it appear, and you shall find me a very boy in my submissions.

Bel. 'Twould be time lost; and I can employ it to advantage. But remember, sir, that this house is another's, not yours; that Fidelia is under my direction, not yours; and that my will must determine her removal, not yours.

Sir Char. Is she your slave, sir, to bear the burden of your insults without complaining, or the right of choosing another master?

Bel. And who shall be that master? You, sir? The poor bird that would escape the kite, is like to find warm protection from the fox.

Sir Char. Pr'ythee, think me a man, and treat me as such.

Bel. As the man I have found you, Sir Charles. Your grave deportment, and honesty of heart, are covers only for wantonness and design. You preach up temperance and sobriety to youth, to monopolize, in age, the vices you are unfit for.

Sir Char. Hark you, young man—you must curb this impetuous spirit of yours, or I shall be tempted to teach you manners, in a method disagreeable to you.

Bel. Learn them first yourself, sir. You say Fidelia is insulted by me; how is it made out? Why, truly, I would possess her without marriage!——I would so. Marriage is the thing I would avoid: 'tis the trick of priests, to make men miserable, and women insolent. I have dealt plainly, and told her

so. Have you said as much? No; you wear the face of honesty, to quiet her fears; that when your blood boils, and security has stolen away her guard, you may rush at midnight upon her beauties, and do the ravage you are sworn to protect her from.

Sir Char. Hold, sir. You have driven me beyond the limits of my patience; and I must tell you, young man, that the obligations I owe your father, demand no returns that manhood must blush to make. Therefore, hold, I say; for I have a sword to do me justice, tho' it should leave my dearerst friend childless.

Bel. I fear it not.

Sir Char. Better tempt it not; for your fears may come too late. You have dealt openly with Fidelia, you say: deal so for once with me, and tell me, whence came that vile scroll to Rosetta this afternoon?

Bel. It seems, then, I wrote it. You dare not think so.

Sir Char. I dare speak, as well as think, where honour directs me.

Bel. You are my accuser, then?

Sir Char. When I become so, I shall take care, Mr. Belmont, that the proof waits upon the accusation.

Bel. I disdain the thought.

Sir Char. Better have disdained the deed.

Bel. I do both—and him that suspects me.

Sir Char. Away! You fear him that suspects you; and have disdained neither the thought nor the deed.

Bel. How, sir? [*Drawing.*

Sir Char. Put up your sword, young man, and use it in a better cause: this is a vile one. And now you shall be as still thro' shame, as you have been loud thro' pride. You should have known, that cowards are unfit for secrets.

Bel. And if I had, sir?

Sir Char. Why, then, sir, you had not employed such a wretch as Faddle, to write that letter to Rosetta.

Bel. The villain has betrayed me! But I'll be sure on't. [*Aside.*] He durst not say I did.

Sir Char. You should rather have built your innocence upon the probability of his unsaying it; for the same fear that made him confess to me, may make him deny every syllable to you.

Bel. What has he confessed, sir?

Sir Char. That, to-day, at dinner, you prompted the letter that he wrote. That your design was, by vilifying Fidelia, to get her dismissed, and the dismission to prepare her ruin in private lodgings. Was this your open behaviour, sir?

Bel. Go on with your upbraidings, sir. Speak to me as you will, and think of me as you will. I have deserved shame, and am taught patience.

Sir Char. Was this well done? Did her innocence, and her undissembled love, deserve this treatment?

Bel. Proceed, sir.

Sir Char. No, sir, I have done. If you have sense of your past conduct, you want not humanity to heal

the wounds it has given. Something must be done, and speedily.

Bel. What reparation can I make her?

Sir Char. Dry up her tears, by an immediate acknowledgment of her wrongs.

Bel. I would do more.

Sir Char. Bid her farewell, then, and consent to her removal.

Bel. I cannot, sir.

Sir Char. Her peace demands it: but we'll talk of that hereafter. If you have honour, go and do her justice, and undeceive your abused sister. Who waits there?——Indeed, you have been to blame, Mr. Belmont.

Enter Servant.

Shew me to the bearer of this letter.

[*Exit with the Servant.*

Bel. Why, what a thing am I!——But 'tis the trick of vice to pay her votaries with shame; and I am rewarded amply. To be a fool's fool too! to link myself in villany with a wretch below the notice of a man! and to be outwitted by him!—So, so!——I may have abused Sir Charles too——Let me think a little——I'll to Fidelia instantly, and tell her what a rogue I have been. But will that be reparation?—I know but of one way; and there my pride stops me——And then I lose her—Worse and worse!——I'll think no more on't; but away to her chamber, and bid her think for me. [*Exit.*

ACT V. SCENE I.

Continues. Enter Sir ROGER *and Servant. Sir* ROGER *with a letter in his hand.*

Sir Roger.

VERY fine doings, indeed! But I'll teach the dog to play his tricks upon his father. A man had better let a lion loose in his family, than a town-rake. Where is Sir Charles, I say?

Serv. This moment come in, sir.

Sir Ro. And why did not you say so, blockhead? Tell him I must speak with him this moment.

Serv. The servant says, he waits for an answer to that letter, sir.

Sir Ro. Do as I bid you, rascal, and let him wait. Fly, I say. [*Exit Servant.*] The riotous young dog! to bring his harlots home with him! But I'll out with the baggage.

Enter Sir CHARLES.

Oh, Sir Charles, 'tis every word as we said this morning! The boy has stolen her, and I am to be ruined by a law-suit.

Sir Char. A law-suit! With whom, sir?

Sir Ro. Read, read, read! [*Gives the letter.*

Sir Char. [*Reads.*] 'I am guardian to that Fidelia, whom your son has stolen from me, and you unjustly detain. If you deny her to me, the law shall right me.

I wait your answer by the bearer, to assert my claim in the person of GEORGE VILLIARD.' Why, then my doubts are at an end. But I must conceal my transports, and wear a face of coolness, while my heart overflows with passion. [*Aside.*

Sir Ro. What, not a word, Sir Charles?—There's a piece of work for you!—And so I am to be ruined.

Sir Char. Do you know this Villiard, Sir Roger?

Sir Ro. Whether I do or not, sir, the slut shall go to him this moment.

Sir Char. Hold a little. This gentleman must be heard, sir, and, if his claim be good, the lady restored.

Sir Ro. Why, e'en let her go as it is, Sir Charles.

Sir Char. That would be too hasty. Go in with me, sir, and we'll consider how to write to him.

Sir Ro. Well, well, well——I wish she was gone, though. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

Another Apartment. Enter Young BELMONT *and* FIDELIA.

Bel. Ask me not why I did it, but forgive me.

Fid. No, sir, 'tis impossible. I have a mind, Mr. Belmont, above the wretchedness of my fortunes; and helpless as I am, I can feel in this breast a sense of injuries, and spirit to resent them.

Bel. Nay, but hear me, Fidelia.

Fid. Was it not enough to desert me in my dis-

tresses, to deny me the poor request I made you, but must you own yourself the contriver of that letter? 'Tis insupportable! If I consented to assume a rank that belonged not to me, my heart went not with the deceit. You would have it so, and I complied. 'Twas shame enough, that I had deceived your sister; it needed not, that I should bring a prostitute to her friendship. This was too much, too much, Mr. Belmont.

Bel. Yet hear me, I say.

Fid. And then, to leave me to the malice of that wretch; to have my supposed infamy the tavern jest of his licentious companions!——I never flattered myself, Mr. Belmont, with your love; but knew not, till now, that I have been the object of your hatred.

Bel. My hatred!—But I have deserved your hardest thoughts of me.——And yet, believe me, Fidelia, when I used you worst, I loved you most.

Fid. Call it by another name; for love delights in acts of kindness. Were yours such, sir?—And yet, must I forget all—for I owe you more than injuries can cancel, or gratitude repay.

Bel. Generous creature! This is to be amiable indeed! But must we part, Fidelia?

Fid. I have resolved it, sir, and you must yield to it.

Bel. Never, my sweet obstinate.

Fid. That I have loved you, 'tis my pride to acknowledge; but that must be forgot. And the hard

task remains, to drive the passion from my breast, while I cherish the memory of your humane offices. This day, then, shall be the last of our meeting. Painful tho' it may be, yet your own, mine, and the family's peace requires it. Heaven, in my distresses, has not left me destitute of a friend; or, if it had, I can find one in my innocence, to make even poverty supportable.

Bel. You have touch'd me, Fidelia; and my heart yields to your virtues. Here, then, let my follies have an end; and thus let me receive you as the everlasting partner of my heart and fortune.

[*Offers to embrace her.*

Fid. No, sir. The conduct that has hitherto secured my own honour, shall protect yours. I have been the innocent disturber of your family; but never will consent to load it with disgrace.

Bel. Nor can it be disgraced. I mean to honour it, Fidelia: you must comply.

Fid. And repay generosity with ruin! No, Mr. Belmont; I can forego happiness, but never can consent to make another miserable.

Bel. When I repent, Fidelia!——But see where my sister comes, to be an advocate for my wishes.

Enter ROSETTA.

Ros. Oh, sir, you are found! You have done nobly, indeed! But your thefts are discovered, sir.—— This lady's guardian has a word or two for you.

Bel. Her guardian! Upon my life, Fidelia, Villiard! He comes as I could wish him.

Ros. Say so when you have answered him, brother. Am I to lose you at last then, Fidelia? And yet my hopes flatter me, that this too, as well as the letter, is a deceit. May I think so, Fidelia?

Fid. As truly as of your goodness, Rosetta.——— Your brother will tell you all. Oh, he has made me miserable by his generosity!

Bel. This pretended guardian, sister, is a villain, and Fidelia the most abused of women. Bounteous he has been indeed; but to his vices, not his virtues, she stands indebted for the best of educations. The story will amaze you. At twelve years old———

Ros. He's here, brother, and with him my papa, Sir Charles, and the colonel. Now, Fidelia.

Enter Sir ROGER, *Sir* CHARLES, *the* Colonel, *and* VILLIARD.

Sir Char. If that be the lady, Mr. Villiard, and your claim as you pretend, Sir Roger has told you, she shall be restored, sir.

Sir Ro. Yes, sir, and your claim as you pretend.

Vil. 'Tis well, madam, I have found you. [*Going to* Fidelia.] This, gentlemen, is the lady; and this the robber who stole her from me: [*Pointing to* Belmont.] By violence, and at midnight he stole her.

Bel. Stole her, sir!

Vil. By violence, and at midnight, I say.

Bel. You shall be heard, sir.

Vil. Ay, sir, and satisfied. I stand here, gentlemen, to demand my ward.

Sir Char. Give us proofs, sir, and you shall have justice.

Vil. Demand them there, sir. [*Pointing to* Bel. *and* Fid.] I have told you, I am robbed: if you deny me justice, the law shall force it.

Sir Char. A little patience, sir. [*To* Villiard.] Do you know this gentleman, Fidelia?

Fid. Too well, sir.

Sir Char. By what means, sir, did you become her guardian? [*To* Vil.

Vil. By the will of her who bore her, sir.

Sir Char. How will you reply to this, Fidelia?

Fid. With truth and honesty, sir.

Bel. Let him proceed, madam.

Vil. Ay, sir, to your part of the story; tho' both are practised in a damn'd falsehood to confront me.

Bel. Falsehood!—But I am cool, sir. Proceed.

Vil. My doors were broke open at midnight by this gentleman, [*Pointing to* Bel.] myself wounded, and Fidelia ravished from me. He ran off with her in his arms. Nor, till this morning, in a coach which brought her hither, have my eyes ever beheld her.

Sir Ro. A very fine business, truly, young man! [*To* Belmont.

Fid. He has abused you, sir. Mr. Belmont is noble———

Bel. No matter, Fidelia. Well, sir, you have been robbed, you say? [*To* Villiard.

Vil. And will have justice, sir.

Bel. Take it from this hand then. [*Drawing.*

Sir Char. Hold, sir. This is adding insult to injuries. Fidelia must be restored, sir.

Sir Ro. Ay, sir, Fidelia must be restored.

Fid. But not to him. Hear but my story, and, if I deceive you, let your friendship forsake me. He bought me, gentlemen, for the worst of purposes; he bought me of the worst of women. A thousand times has he confessed it, and as often pleaded his right of purchase to undo me. Whole years have I endured his brutal solicitations; till, tired with entreaties, he had recourse to violence. The scene was laid, and I had been ruined beyond redress, had not my cries brought the generous Mr. Belmont to my relief. He was accidentally passing by, and alarmed, at midnight, with a woman's shrieks, he forced open the door, and saved me from destruction.

Sir Char. How will you answer this, sir? [*To* Vil.

Vil. 'Tis false, sir. That woman was her nurse: these hands delivered her to her care.

Fid. Alas, gentlemen, she found me a helpless infant at her door! So she has always told me; and at twelve years old, betrayed me to that monster.—— Search out the woman, if she be alive, and let me be confronted.

Sir Ro. If this be true, Sir Charles, I shall bless myself as long as I live, for getting my boy. [*Weeps.*

Vil. 'Tis false, I say; a damn'd contrivance to

escape me. I stand here, sir, to demand my ward. [*To* Sir Ro.] Deny her to me at your peril.

Bel. He shall have my life as soon.

Vil. Hark you, sir. [*To Sir* Ro.] There are things called laws, to do right to the injured. My appeal shall be to them.

Sir Char. That woman must be produced, sir. [*To* Vil.

Vil. And shall, sir, in a court of justice. Our next meeting shall be there. Till then, madam, you are secure. [*To* Fidelia.

Bel. Take care that you are so, sir, when we have occasion to call upon you. You shall have justice.

Vil. And will, sir, in defiance of you. [*Exit.*

Sir Char. Fear not, Fidelia; we believe, and will protect you.

Ros. My sweet girl!——But whence came the letter this afternoon?

Bel. 'Twas I that wrote it.

Ros. Oh, monstrous!——And could you be that wretch, brother?

Bel. And will atone for it, by the only recompence that's left me.

Sir Ro. And what recompence will you make her, ha, rogue?

Bel. I have injured her, sir, and must do her justice. If you would retrieve my honour, or promote my happiness, give me your consent, sir, to make *her* your daughter.

Ros. Why, that's my brother! Now I am sure she's innocent. And so you will, papa.

Sir Ro. But positively I will not, child. Marry her, indeed! What, without a shilling! and be ruined by Villiard into the bargain! If your story be true, Fidelia, you shall be provided for. But no marrying, d'ye hear, child?

Fid. You need not doubt me, sir.

Sir Ro. Why, that's well said, Fidelia.

Ros. And deserves reward, sir. Pray, Sir Charles, let us have your thoughts upon this matter.

Sir Char. Your brother's proposal, madam, and Fidelia's denial, are as generous as your father's determination is just.

Bel. I expected as much, sir.

Sir Char. My opinion was asked, sir.

Bel. And you have given it. I thank you, sir.

Sir Char. Think of Villiard, Mr. Belmont; his claim may be renewed, sir.

Bel. Fidelia has deceived you then. You think otherwise, Sir Charles.

Col. My life upon her innocence!—And where the fortune on one side is more than sufficient, how light is all addition to it, compared to the possession of her one loves!—Let me, sir, be happy in Rosetta, [*To Sir* Roger.] and give her fortune to Fidelia, to make her an object worthy of your son.

Ros. There's a colonel for you!——What says my sweet Fidelia?

Fid. I intended to be silent, madam; but 'tis now

my duty to speak. You have been my deliverer, sir, from the worst of evils; [*To* Bel.] and now would nobly augment the first obligation by a generosity too mighty for acknowledgment. If I had the wealth of worlds, it would be too little to bestow. But poor and friendless as I am, my heart may break, but never shall consent to make my benefactor a penitent to his virtues.

Sir Char. 'Tis nobly said, Fidelia. And now, Mr. Belmont, our disputes will soon be at an end. You have this day, sir, reproached me often; it remains now that you should know me as I am.

Bel. If I have erred, sir——

Sir Char. Interrupt me not, but hear me. I have watched your follies with concern; and 'tis with equal pleasure I congratulate your return to honour. If I have opposed your generous inclinations, it was only to give them strength. I am now a suppliant to your father for the happiness you desire.

Bel. This is noble, Sir Charles!

Sir Char. And to make Fidelia worthy of his son, a fortune shall be added equal to his warmest expectations.

Sir Ro. Why ay, Sir Charles, let that be made out, and I shall have no objections.

Fid. What mean you, sir? [*To Sir* Char.

Sir Char. A minute more, and my sweet girl shall be instructed. You have often told me, sir, [*To* Bel.] that I had an interest in this lovely creature. I have an interest! an interest, that you shall allow me!

My heart doteſ upon her! Oh, I can hold no longer! ——My daughter! my daughter!

[*Running to* Fidelia, *and embracing her.*

Fid. Your daughter, sir!

Sir Char. Oh, my sweet child!—Sir Roger, Mr. Belmont, my son!——These tears!—these tears!—Fidelia is my daughter!

Col. Is't possible?

Sir Char. Let not excess of wonder overpower you, Fidelia, for I have a tale to tell, that will exceed belief.

Fid. Oh, sir!

Sir Char. Upbraid me not, that I have kept it a moment from your knowledge——'twas a hard trial! and while my tongue was taught dissimulation, my heart bled for a child's distresses.

Bel. Torture us not, sir, but explain this wonder!

Sir Char. My tears must have their way first——O, my child! my child! [*Turning to Sir* Roger *and the rest.*]—Know then, that wicked woman, so often mentioned, was my Fidelia's governante. When my mistaken zeal drove me into banishment, I left her, an infant, to her care—To secure some jewels of value I had lodged with her, she became the woman you have heard——My child was taught to believe she was a foundling——her name of Harriet changed to Fidelia——and, to lessen my solicitude for the theft, a letter was dispatched to me in France, that my infant daughter had no longer a being. Thus was the father robbed of his child, and the brother taught to believe he had no sister!

Fid. Am I that sister, and that daughter?——Oh, Heavens! [*Kneels.*

Bel. [*Running to her, and raising her.*] Be composed, my life! A moment's attention more, and your transports shall have a loose. Proceed, sir!

Sir Char. Where she withdrew herself, I could never learn. At twelve years old she sold her, as you have heard, and never, till yesterday, made enquiry about her. 'Twas then, that a sudden fit of sickness brought her to repentance. She sent for Villiard, who told her minutely what had happened. The knowledge of her deliverance gave her some consolation. But more was to be done yet. She had information of my pardon and return, and ignorant of my child's deliverer, or the place of her conveyance, she at last determined to unburthen herself to me. A letter was brought to me this afternoon, conjuring me to follow the bearer with the same haste that I would shun ruin. I did follow him, and received from this wretched woman the story I have told you.

Fid. Oh, my heart!—My father! [*Kneels.*] Have I at last found you! And were all my sorrows past meant only to endear the present transport—'Tis too much for me.

Sir Char. Rise, my child! To find thee thus virtuous, in the midst of temptations, and thus lovely, in the midst of poverty and distress——after an absence of eighteen melancholy years, when imaginary death had torn thee from my hopes——to find thee

thus unexpectedly, and thus amiable, is happiness that the uninterrupted enjoyments of the fairest life never equalled!

Fid. What must be mine then! Have I a brother too! [*Turning to the Colonel.*] Oh, my kind fortune!

Col. My sister! [*Embracing her.*

Fid. Still there is a dearer claim than all, and now I can acknowledge it. My deliverer!

Bel. And husband, Fidelia! Let me receive you as the richest gift of Fortune! [*Catching her in his arms.*

Ros. My generous girl! The pride of your alliance is my utmost boast, as it is my brother's happiness.

Sir Ro. I have a right in her too, for now you are my daughter, Fidelia. [*Kisses her.*

Fid. I had forgot, sir—If you will receive me as such, you shall find my gratitude in my obedience.

Sir Char. Take her, Mr. Belmont, and protect the virtue you have tried. [*Joining their hands.*

Bel. The study of my life, sir, shall be to deserve her.

Fid. Oh, Rosetta! yet it still remains with you to make this day's happiness complete—I have a brother that loves you.

Ros. I would be Fidelia's sister every way! So take me while I am warm, colonel! [*Giving him her hand.*

Col. And when we repent, Rosetta, let the next minute end us.

Ros. With all my heart!

Fid. Now, Rosetta, we are doubly sisters!

Sir Char. And may your lives and your affections know an end together.

Bel. [*Taking* Fidelia *by the hand.*] And now, Fidelia, what you have made me, take me, a convert to honour! I have at last learnt, that custom can be no authority for vice; and however the mistaken world may judge, he who solicits pleasure, at the expence of innocence, is the vilest of betrayers.

Yet savage man, the wildest beast of prey,
Assumes the face of kindness to betray;
His giant strength against the weak employs,
And woman, whom he should protect, destroys.

[Exeunt omnes.

EPILOGUE.

WRITTEN BY MR. GARRICK.

Spoken by Mrs. Cibber.

I KNOW you all expect, from seeing me,
An Epilogue, of strictest purity;
Some formal lecture, spoke with prudish face,
To shew our present joking, giggling race;
True joy consists in——gravity and grace!
But why am I for ever made the tool
Of every squeamish, moralizing fool?
Condemn'd to sorrow all my life, must I
Ne'er make you laugh, because I make you cry?
Madam (say they), your face denotes your heart,
'Tis yours to melt us in the mournful part.
So from the looks our hearts they prudish deem!
Alas, poor souls!——we are not what we seem!
Tho' prudence oft our inclination smothers,
We grave ones love a joke—as well as others.
From such dull stuff, what profit can you reap?
You cry—'Tis very fine—[Yawns.]*—and fall asleep.*
Happy that bard!——blest with uncommon art,
Whose wit can cheer, and not corrupt the heart!
Happy that play'r, whose skill can chase the spleen,
And leave no worse inhabitant within.

Sir Char. And may your lives and your affections know an end together.

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Some formal lecture, spoke with prudish face,
To shew our present joking, giggling race;
True joy consists in——gravity and grace!
But why am I for ever made the tool
Of every squeamish, moralizing fool?
Condemn'd to sorrow all my life, must I
Ne'er make you laugh, because I make you cry?
Madam (say they), your face denotes your heart,
'Tis yours to melt us in the mournful part.
So from the looks our hearts they prudish deem!
Alas, poor souls!——we are not what we seem!
Tho' prudence oft our inclination smothers,
We grave ones love a joke—as well as others.
From such dull stuff, what profit can you reap?
You cry—'Tis very fine—[Yawns.]*—and fall asleep.*
Happy that bard!——blest with uncommon art,
Whose wit can cheer, and not corrupt the heart!
Happy that play'r, whose skill can chase the spleen,
And leave no worse inhabitant within.

'Mongst friends, our author is a modest man,
But wicked wits will cavil at his plan.
Damn it (says one), this stuff will never pass,
The girl wants nature, and the rake's an ass.
Had I, like Belmont, heard a damsel's cries,
I would have pink'd her keeper, seiz'd the prize,
Whipt to a coach, not valu'd tears a farthing,
But drove away like smoke——to Covent-Garden;
There to some house convenient would have carry'd her,
And then—dear soul!—the devil should have marry'd her.
But this our author thought too hard upon her;
Besides, his spark, forsooth, must have some honour:
The fool's a fabulist!——and deals in fiction;
Or he had giv'n him vice——without restriction.
Of fable, all his characters partake,
Sir Charles is virtuous——and for Virtue's sake;
Nor vain, nor blust'ring is the soldier writ,
His rake has conscience, modesty, and wit.
The ladies too!——how oddly they appear!
His prude is chaste, and his coquette sincere:
In short, so strange a group ne'er trod the stage,
At once to please, and satirize the age!
For you, ye fair, his muse has chiefly sung,
'Tis you have touch'd his heart, and tun'd his tongue;
The sex's champion, let the sex defend,
A soothing poet is a charming friend:
Your favours, here bestow'd, will meet reward,
So as you love dear flatt'ry——save your bard.

THE END.

THE MINOR.

A

COMEDY,

By SAMUEL FOOTE, Esq.

ADAPTED FOR

THEATRICAL REPRESENTATION,

AS PERFORMED AT THE

THEATRES-ROYAL,

DRURY-LANE AND COVENT-GARDEN.

REGULATED FROM THE PROMPT-BOOKS,

By Permission of the Managers.

"The Lines distinguished by inverted Commas, are omitted in the Representation."

LONDON:

Printed for the Proprietors, under the Direction of

JOHN BELL, British-Library, STRAND,

Bookseller to His Royal Highness the PRINCE of WALES.

MDCCXCII.

It was not from a patron of the liberal arts they were to expect an oppressor; it was not from the friend of freedom, and of man, they were to dread partial monopolies, or the establishment of petty tyrannies.

Their warmest wishes are accomplished; none of their rights have been invaded, except what, without the first poetic authority, I should not venture to call a right, the Jus Nocendi.

Your tenderness, my Lord, for all the followers of the Muses, has been in no instance more conspicuous, than in your late favour to me, the meanest of their train; your Grace has thrown open (for those who are denied admittance into the Palaces of Parnassus) a cottage on its borders, where the unhappy migrants may be, if not magnificently, at least, hospitably entertained.

I shall detain your Grace no longer, than just to echo the public voice, that, for the honour, progress, and perfection of letters, your Grace may long continue their candid CENSOR, *who have always been their generous protector.*

I have the honour, my Lord, to be, with the greatest respect, and gratitude,

Your Grace's most dutiful,

Most obliged,

And obedient Servant,

Ellestre, *SAMUEL FOOTE.*
July 8, 1760.

THE MINOR.

THE Dramas of this Writer, having been founded upon the floating incidents and the characters of his own time, have no other claims upon posterity than what their keenness of wit and fertility of humour may give. Few of them are like Shakspere's Representations of General Nature. The Characters are not those of the Class, but the Individual, and when the original is snatched from our recollection, the copy is thereby abated of its principal power to please. They therefore depend more upon mimicry than just conception, and his personages will continue to be traditionally played in the manner that Foote, their creator, performed them.

This bar to his perpetuity of Fame affects the present Play less than most of his Collection. The Minor can be scarcely out of vogue while we have a BAWD in the Stews, an AUCTIONEER in the Rostrum, or a METHODIST in the Pulpit.

It may be desirable to transmit, that the Characters sketched under the appellations of *Mother Cole*, *Smirk*, and *Shift*, were very just imitations of the well-known Mother DOUGLAS, Mr. LANGFORD the Auctioneer, and GEORGE WHITFIELD, the Enthusiast.

The present Play was happily conducive to opening the eyes of Men upon the pernicious principles of the wretched Devotees of the Tabernacle. It is at all times dangerous to attack any mode of piety, but true devotion suffered little, it is believed, on the present occasion.

Sir Char. And may your lives and your affections know an end together.

Bel. [*Taking* Fidelia *by the hand.*] And now, Fidelia, what you have made me, take me, a convert to honour! I have at last learnt, that custom can be no authority for vice; and however the mistaken world may judge, he who solicits pleasure, at the expence of innocence, is the vilest of betrayers.

Yet savage man, the wildest beast of prey,
Assumes the face of kindness to betray;
His giant strength against the weak employs,
And woman, whom he should protect, destroys.

[Exeunt omnes.

EPILOGUE.

WRITTEN BY MR. GARRICK.

Spoken by Mrs. CIBBER.

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Some formal lecture, spoke with prudish face,
To shew our present joking, giggling race;
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MDCCXCII.

Foote. Why look'e, Smart, though you are in the language of the world, my friend, yet there is one thing you, I am sure, love better than any body.

Smart. What's that?

Foote. Mischief.

Smart. No, pr'ythee———

Foote. How now am I sure that you, who so readily give up your relations, may not have some design upon me?

Smart. I don't understand you.

Foote. Why, as soon as my characters begin to circulate a little successfully, my mouth is stopped in a minute, by the clamour of your relations.———Oh, damme,—'tis a shame, it should not be,—people of distinction brought upon the stage.——And so out of compliment to your cousins, I am to be beggared for treating the public with the follies of your family, at your own request.

Smart. How can you think I would be such a dog? What the devil, then, are we to have nothing personal? Give us the actors, however.

Foote. Oh, that's stale. Besides, I think they have, of all men, the best right to complain.

Smart. How so?

Foote. Because, by rendering them ridiculous in their profession, you, at the same time, injure their pockets.——Now as to the other gentry, they have providentially something besides their understanding to rely upon; and the only injury they can receive, is,—that the whole town is then diverted with

what before, was only the amusement of private parties.

Cank. Give us then a national portrait: a Scotchman or an Irishman.

Foote. If you mean merely the dialect of the two countries, I cann't think it either a subject of satire or humour; it is an accidental unhappiness, for which a man is no more accountable, than the colour of his hair. Now affectation I take to be the true comic object. If, indeed, a North Briton, struck with a scheme of reformation, should advance from the banks of the Tweed, to teach the English the true pronunciation of their own language, he would, I think, merit your laughter: nor would a Dublin mechanic, who, from heading the Liberty-boys, in a skirmish on Ormond Quay, should think he had a right to prescribe military laws to the first commander in Europe, be a less ridiculous object.

Smart. Are there such?

Foote. If you mean that the blunders of a few peasants, or the partial principles of a single scoundrel, are to stand as characteristical marks of a whole country; your pride may produce a laugh, but, believe me, it is at the expence of your understanding.

Cank. Heyday, what a system is here! Laws for laughing!——And pray, sage sir, instruct us when we may laugh with propriety?

Foote. At an old beau, a superannuated beauty, a military coward, a stuttering orator, or a gouty dan-

cer. In short, whoever affects to be what he is not, or strives to be what he cannot, is an object worthy the poet's pen, and your mirth.

Smart. Psha, I don't know what you mean by your is nots, and cannots—damned abstruse jargon.—Ha, Canker!

Cank. Well, but if you will not give us persons, let us have things. Treat us with a modern amour, and a state intrigue, or a———

Foote. And so amuse the public ear at the expence of private peace. You must excuse me.

Cank. And with these principles, you expect to thrive on this spot?

Smart. No, no, it won't do. I tell thee the plain roast and boiled of the Theatres will never do at this table. We must have high seasoned *ragoûts*, and rich sauces.

Foote. Why, perhaps, by way of dessert, I may produce something that may hit your palate.

Smart. Your bill of fare?

Foote. What think you of one of those itinerant field Orators, who, though at declared enmity with common sense, have the address to poison the principles, and at the same time pick the pockets of half our industrious fellow subjects?

Cank. Have a care. Dangerous ground. *Ludere cum sacris*, you know.

Foote. Now I look upon it in a different manner. I consider these gentlemen in the light of public performers, like myself; and whether we exhibit at Tot-

tenham-Court, or the Hay-Market, our purpose is the same, and the place is immaterial

Cank. Why, indeed, if it be considered——

Foote. Nay, more, I must beg leave to assert, that ridicule is the only antidote against this pernicious poison. This is a madness that argument can never cure: and should a little wholesome severity be applied, persecution would be the immediate cry: where then can we have recourse, but to the comic muse? Perhaps, the archness and severity of her smile may redress an evil, that the laws cannot reach, or reason reclaim.

Cank. Why, if it does not cure those already distempered, it may be a means to stop the infection.

Smart. But how is your scheme conducted?

Foote. Of that you may judge. We are just going upon a repetition of the piece.——I should be glad to have your opinion.

Smart. We will give it you.

Foote. One indulgence: As you are Englishmen, I think, I need not beg, that as from necessity most of my performers are new, you will allow for their inexperience, and encourage their timidity.

Smart. But reasonable.

Foote. Come, then, prompter, begin.

Pearse. Lord, sir, we are all at a stand.

Foote. What's the matter?

Pearse. Mrs. O'Schohnesy has returned the part of the bawd; she says she is a gentlewoman, and it

would be a reflection on her family to do any such thing!

Foote. Indeed!

Pearse. If it had been only a whore, says she, I should not have minded it; because no lady need be ashamed of doing that.

Foote. Well, there is no help for it; but these gentlemen must not be disappointed. Well, I'll do the character myself. [*Exeunt.*

ACT I. SCENE I.

Enter Sir WILLIAM WEALTHY, *and Mr.* RICHARD WEALTHY.

Sir William.

COME, come, brother, I know the world. People who have their attention eternally fixed upon one object, cann't help being a little narrow in their notions.

R. Weal. A sagacious remark that, and highly probable, that we merchants, who maintain a constant correspondence with the four quarters of the world, should know less of it than your fashionable fellows, whose whole experience is bounded by Westminster-bridge.

Sir Will. Nay, brother, as a proof that I am not blind to the benefit of travelling, George, you know, has been in Germany these four years.

R. Weal. Where he is well grounded in gaming and gluttony; France has furnished him with fawning and flattery; Italy equipp'd him with capriols and cantatas: and thus accomplished, my young gentleman is returned with a cargo of whores, cooks, valets de chambre, and fiddlesticks, a most valuable member of the British commonwealth.

Sir Will. You dislike then my system of education?

R. Weal. Most sincerely.

Sir Will. The whole?

R. Weal. Every particular.

Sir Will. The early part, I should imagine, might merit your approbation.

R. Weal. Least of all. What, I suppose, because he has run the gauntlet through a public school, where, at sixteen, he had practised more vices than he would otherwise have heard of at sixty.

Sir Will. Ha, ha, prejudice!

R. Weal. Then, indeed, you removed him to the University; where, lest his morals should be mended, and his understanding improved, you fairly set him free from the restraint of the one, and the drudgery of the other, by the privileged distinction of a silk gown and a velvet cap.

Sir Will. And all these evils, you think, a city education would have prevented?

R. Weal. Doubtless.—Proverbs, proverbs, brother William, convey wholesome instruction. Idleness is the root of all evil. Regular hours, constant employment, and good example, cann't fail to form the mind.

Sir Will. Why truly, brother, had you stuck to your old civic vices, hypocrisy, couzenage, and avarice, I don't know whether I might not have committed George to your care; but you cockneys now beat us suburbians at our own weapons. What, old boy, times are changed since the date of thy indentures; when the sleek, crop-eared 'prentice used to

dangle after his mistress, with the great bible under his arm, to St. Bride's, on a Sunday; bring home the text, repeat the divisions of the discourse, dine at twelve, and regale upon a gaudy day with buns and beer at Islington, or Mile End.

R. Weal. Wonderfully facetious!

Sir Will. Our modern lads are of a different metal. They have their gaming clubs in the Garden, their little lodgings, the snug depositories of their rusty swords, and occasional bag-wigs; their horses for the turf; ay, and their commissions of bankruptcy too, before they are well out of their time.

R. Weal. Infamous aspersion!

Sir Will. But the last meeting at Newmarket, Lord Lofty received at the hazard-table the identical note from the individual taylor to whom he had paid it but the day before, for a new set of liveries.

R. Weal. Invention!

Sir Will. These are anecdotes you will never meet with in your weekly travels from Cateaton-street to your boarded box in Clapham, brother.

R. Weal. And yet that boarded box, as your prodigal spendthrift proceeds, will soon be the only seat of the family.

Sir Will. May be not. Who knows what a reformation our project may produce!

R. Weal. I do. None at all.

Sir Will. Why so?

R. Weal. Because your means are ill-proportioned to their end. Were he my son, I would serve him—

Shift. I did, sir.

Sir Will. Your name, I think, is Shift?

Shift. It is, sir.

Sir Will. Did Mr. Capias drop any hint of my business with you?

Shift. None. He only said, with his spectacles on his nose, and his hand upon his chin, Sir William Wealthy is a respectable personage, and my client; he wants to retain you in a certain affair, and will open the case, and give you your brief himself: if you adhere to his instructions, and carry your cause, he is generous, and will discharge your bill without taxation.

Sir Will. Ha! ha! my friend Capias to a hair! Well, sir, this is no bad specimen of your abilities. But see that the door is fast. Now, sir, you are to—

Shift. A moment's pause, if you please. You must know, Sir William, I am a prodigious admirer of forms. Now Mr. Capias tells me, that it is always the rule to administer a retaining fee before you enter upon the merits.

Sir Will. Oh, sir, I beg your pardon!

Shift. Not that I question your generosity; but forms you know———

Sir Will. No apology, I beg. But as we are to have a closer connection, it may not be amiss, by way of introduction, to understand one another a little. Pray, sir, where was you born?

Shift. At my father's.

Sir Will. Hum!——And what was he?

Shift. A gentleman.

Sir Will. What was you bred?

Shift. A gentleman.

Sir Will. How do you live?

Shift. Like a gentleman.

Sir Will. Could nothing induce you to unbosom yourself?

Shift. Look'e, Sir William, there is a kind of something in your countenance, a certain openness and generosity, a *je ne sçai quoi* in your manner, that I will unlock: You shall see me all.

Sir Will. You will oblige me.

Shift. You must know then, that Fortune, which frequently delights to raise the noblest structures from the simplest foundations; who from a taylor made a pope, from a gin-shop an empress, and many a prime minister from nothing at all, has thought fit to raise me to my present height, from the humble employment of Light your Honour——A link boy.

Sir Will. A pleasant fellow.——Who were your parents?

Shift. I was produced, sir, by a left-handed marriage, in the language of the news-papers, between an illustrious lamp-lighter and an eminent itinerant cat and dog butcher.—Cat's meat, and dog's meat. ——I dare say, you have heard my mother, sir. But as to this happy pair I owe little besides my being, I shall drop them where they dropt me—in the street.

Sir Will. Proceed.

Shift. My first knowledge of the world I owe to a

school, which has produced many a great man—the avenues of the play-house. There, sir, leaning on my extinguished link, I learned dexterity from pick-pockets, connivance from constables, politics and fashions from footmen, and the art of making and breaking a promise from their masters. Here, sirrah, light me a-cross the kennel.——I hope your honour will remember poor Jack.——You ragged rascal, I have no halfpence——I'll pay you the next time I see you——But, lack-a-day, sir, that time I saw as seldom as his tradesmen.

Sir Will. Very well.

Shift. To these accomplishments from without the theatre, I must add one that I obtained within.

Sir Will. How did you gain admittance there?

Shift. My merit, sir, that, like my link, threw a radiance round me.——A detachment from the head quarters here took possession, in the summer, of a country corporation, where I did the honours of the barn, by sweeping the stage and clipping the candles. There my skill and address was so conspicuous, that it procured me the same office, the ensuing winter, at Drury-Lane, where I acquired intrepidity; the crown of all my virtues.

Sir Will. How did you obtain that?

Shift. By my post. For I think, sir, he that dares stand the shot of the gallery in lighting, snuffing, and sweeping, the first night of a new play, may bid defiance to the pillory, with all its customary compliments.

Sir Will. Some truth in that.

Shift. But an unlucky crab-apple, applied to my right eye by a patriot gingerbread-baker from the Borough, who would not suffer three dancers from Switzerland because he hated the French, forced me to a precipitate retreat.

Sir Will. Poor devil!

Shift. Broglio and Contades have done the same. But as it happened, like a tennis-ball, I rose higher than the rebound.

Sir Will. How so?

Shift. My misfortune, sir, moved the compassion of one of our performers, a whimsical man, he took me into his service. To him I owe what I believe will make me useful to you.

Sir Will. Explain.

Shift. Why, sir, my master was remarkably happy in an art, which, however disesteemed at present, is, by Tully, reckoned amongst the perfections of an orator—mimicry.

Sir Will. Why you are deeply read, Mr. Shift!

Shift. A smattering—But as I was saying, sir, nothing came amiss to my master. Bipeds, or quadrupeds; rationals, or animals; from the clamour of the bar to the tackle of the barn-door; from the soporific twang of the tabernacle of Tottenham-Court, to the melodious bray of their long-eared brethren in Bunhill-Fields; all were objects of his imitation, and my attention. In a word, sir, for two whole years, under this professor, I studied and starved,

impoverished my body, and pampered my mind; till thinking myself pretty near equal to my master, I made him one of his own bows, and set up for myself.

Sir Will. You have been successful, I hope.

Shift. Pretty well, I cann't complain. My art, sir, is a *pass-par-tout*. I seldom want employment. Let's see how stand my engagements. [*Pulls out a pocket-book.*] Hum—hum, Oh! Wednesday at Mrs. Gammut's, near Hanover-square; there, there, I shall make a meal upon the Mingotti; for her ladyship is in the opera interest; but, however, I shall revenge her cause upon her rival Mattei. Sunday evening at Lady Sustinuto's concert. Thursday I dine upon the actors, with ten Templars, at the Mitre in Fleet-street. Friday I am to give the amorous parly of two intriguing cats in a gutter, with the disturbing of a hen-roost, at Mr. Deputy Sugarsops, near the Monument. So, sir, you see my hands are full. In short, Sir William, there is not a buck or a turtle devoured within the bills of mortality, but there I may, if I please, stick a napkin under my chin.

Sir Will. I'm afraid, Mr. Shift, I must break in a little upon your engagements; but you shall not be a loser by the bargain.

Shift. Command me.

Sir Will. You can be secret as well as serviceable?

Shift. Mute as a mackrel.

Sir Will. Come hither then. If you betray me to my son——

Shift. Scalp me.

Sir Will. Enough.——You must know then, the hopes of our family are, Mr. Shift, centered in one boy.

Shift. And I warrant he is a hopeful one.

Sir Will. No interruption, I beg. George has been abroad these four years, and from his late behaviour I have reason to believe, that had a certain event happened, which I am afraid he wished,——my death——

Shift. Yes; that's natural enough.

Sir Will. Nay, pray,—there would soon be an end to an ancient and honourable family.

Shift. Very melancholy indeed. But families, like besoms, will wear to the stumps, and finally fret out, as you say.

Sir Will. Pr'ythee, peace for five minutes.

Shift. I am tongue-ty'd.

Sir Will. Now I have projected a scheme to prevent this calamity.

Shift. Ay, I should be glad to hear that.

Sir Will. I am going to tell it you.

Shift. Proceed.

Sir Will. George, as I have contrived it, shall experience all the misery of real ruin, without running the least risque.

Shift. Ay, that will be a *coup de maitre.*

Sir Will. I have prevailed upon his uncle, a wealthy citizen——

Shift. I don't like a city plot.

Sir Will. I tell thee it is my own.

Shift. I beg pardon.

Sir Will. My brother, I say, some time since wrote him a circumstantial account of my death; upon which he is returned, in full expectation of succeeding to my estate.

Shift. Immediately.

Sir Will. No; when at age. In about three months.

Shift. I understand you.

Sir Will. Now, sir, guessing into what hands my heedless boy would naturally fall, on his return, I have, in a feigned character, associated myself with a set of rascals, who will spread every bait that can flatter folly, inflame extravagance, allure inexperience, or catch credulity. And when, by their means, he thinks himself reduced to the last extremity; lost even to the most distant hope——

Shift. What then?

Sir Will. Then will I step in like his guardian-angel, and snatch him from perdition. If mortified by misery, he becomes conscious of his errors, I have saved my son; but if, on the other hand, gratitude cann't bind, nor ruin reclaim him, I will cast him out as an alien to my blood, and trust for the support of my name and family to a remoter branch.

Shift. Bravely resolved. But what part am I to sustain in this drama?

Sir Will. Why George, you are to know, is already stript of what money he could command by

two sharpers: but as I never trust them out of my sight, they cann't deceive me.

Shift. Out of your sight!

Sir Will. Why, I tell thee, I am one of the knot: an adept in their science, can slip, shuffle, cog, or cut with the best of them.

Shift. How do you escape your son's notice?

Sir Will. His firm persuasion of my death, with the extravagance of my disguise.——Why, I would engage to elude your penetration, when I am beau'd out for the baron. But of that by and by. He has recourse, after his ill success, to the cent. per cent. gentry, the usurers, for a further supply.

Shift. Natural enough.

Sir Will. Pray do you know—I forget his name—a wrinkled old fellow, in a thread-bare coat? He sits every morning, from twelve till two, in the left corner of Lloyd's Coffee-house; and every evening, from five till eight, under the clock at the Temple-Exchange.

Shift. What, little Transfer the broker!

Sir Will. The same. Do you know him?

Shift. Know him!—Ay, rot him. It was but last Easter Tuesday, he had me turned out at a feast, in Leather-seller's Hall, for singing 'Room for Cuckolds' like a parrot; and vowed it meant a reflection upon the whole body corporate.

Sir Will. You have reason to remember him.

Shift. Yes, yes, I recommended a minor to him myself, for the loan only of fifty pounds; and would

you believe it, as I hope to be saved, we dined, supped, and wetted, five and thirty guineas upon tick, in meetings at the Cross-keys, in order to settle the terms; and after all, the scoundrel would not lend us a stiver.

Sir Will. Could you personate him?

Shift. Him! Oh, you shall see me shift into his shamble in a minute: and, with a withered face, a bit of a purple nose, a cautionary stammer, and a sleek silver head, I would undertake to deceive even his banker. But to speak the truth, I have a friend that can do this inimitably well. Have not you something of more consequence for me?

Sir Will. I have.——Could not you, master Shift, assume another shape? You have attended auctions.

Shift. Auctions! a constant puff. Deep in the mystery; a professed *connoisseur*, from a Niger to a Nautilus, from the Apollo Belvidere to a Butterfly.

Sir Will. One of these insinuating, oily orators I will get you to personate: for we must have the plate and jewels in our possession, or they will soon fall into other hands.

Shift. I will do it.

Sir Will. Within I will give you farther instructions.

Shift. I'll follow you.

Sir Will. [*Going, returns.*] You will want materials.

Shift. Oh, m dress I can be furnished with in five minutes. [*Exit Sir* Will.]——A whimsical old blade

this. I shall laugh if this scheme miscarries. I have a strange mind to lend it a lift—never had a greater ———Pho, a damned unnatural connection this of mine! What have I to do with fathers and guardians! a parcel of preaching, prudent, careful, curmudgeonly —dead to pleasures themselves, and the blasters of it in others.——Mere dogs in a manger——No, no, I'll veer, tack about, open my budget to the boy, and join in a counter-plot. But hold, hold, friend Stephen, see first how the land lies. Who knows whether this Germanized genius has parts to comprehend, or spirit to reward thy merit. There's danger in that, ay, marry is there. 'Egad, before I shift the helm, I'll first examine the coast; and then if there be but a bold shore, and a good bottom, have a care, old Square Toes, you will meet with your match. [*Exit.*

Enter Sir GEORGE, LOADER, *and Servant.*

Sir Geo. Let the Martin pannels for the vis-a-vis be carried to Long-Acre, and the pye-balls sent to Hall's to be bitted——You will give me leave to be in your debt till the evening, Mr. Loader.——I have just enough left to discharge the baron; and we must, you know, be punctual with him, for the credit of the country.

Load. Fire him, a snub-nosed son of a bitch. Levant me, but he got enough last night to purchase a principality amongst his countrymen, the High dutchjans and Hussarians.

Sir Geo. You had your share, Mr. Loader.

Load. Who, I?——Lurch me at four, but I was marked to the top of your trick, by the baron, my dear. What, I am no cinque and quarter man. Come, shall we have a dip in the history of the Four Kings this morning?

Sir Geo. Rather too early. Besides, it is the rule abroad, never to engage a-fresh, till our old scores are discharged.

Load. Capot me, but those lads abroad are pretty fellows, let them say what they will. Here, sir, they will vowel you from father to son, to the twentieth generation. They would as soon, now-a-days, pay a tradesman's bill, as a play debt. All sense of honour is gone, not a stiver stirring. They could as soon raise the dead as two pounds two; nick me, but I have a great mind to tie up, and ruin the rascals—— What, has Transfer been here this morning?

Enter DICK.

Sir Geo. Any body here this morning, Dick?

Dick. No body, your honour.

Load. Repique the rascal. He promised to be here before me.

Dick. I beg your honour's pardon. Mrs. Cole from the Piazza was here, between seven and eight.

Sir Geo. An early hour for a lady of her calling.

Dick. Mercy on me! The poor gentlewoman is mortally altered since we used to lodge there, in our jaunts from Oxford; wrapt up in flannels: all over the rheumatise.

Load. Ay, ay, old Moll is at her last stake.

Dick. She bade me say, she just stopt in her way to the tabernacle; after the exhortation, she says, she'll call again.

Sir Geo. Exhortation!——Oh, I recollect. Well, whilst they only make proselytes from that profession, they are heartily welcome to them. She does not mean to make me a convert?

Dick. I believe she has some such design upon me; for she offered me a book of hymns, a shilling, and a dram, to go along with her.

Sir Geo. No bad scheme, Dick. Thou hast a fine, sober, psalm-singing countenance; and when thou hast been some time in their trammels, may'st make as able a teacher as the best of them.

Dick. Laud, sir; I want learning.

Sir Geo. Oh, the spirit, the spirit, will supply all that, Dick, never fear.

Enter Sir WILLIAM, *as a German Baron.*

My dear baron, what news from the Hay-Market? What says the Florenza? Does she yield? Shall I be happy? Say yes, and command my fortune.

Sir Will. I was never did see so fine a woman since I was leave Hamburgh; dere was all de colour, all red and white, dat was quite natural; point d'artifice. Then she was dance and sing——I vow to Heaven, I was never see de like!

Sir Geo. But how did she receive my embassy?—What hopes?

Sir Will. Why dere was, monsieur le chevalier, when I first enter, dree or four damned queer people; ah, ah, dought I, by gad I guess your business. Dere was one fat big woman's, dat I know long time: le valet de chambre was tell me dat she came from a grand merchand; ha, ha, dought I, by your leave, stick to your shop; or, if you must have de pritty girl, dere is de play-hous, dat do very well for you; but for de opera, pardonnez, by gar dat is meat for your master.

Sir Geo. Insolent mechanic!——But she despised him?

Sir Will. Ah, may foy, he is damned rich, has beaucoup de guineas; but after de fat woman was go, I was tell the signora, madam, dere is one certain chevalier of dis country, who has travelled, see de world, bien fait, well made, beaucoup d'Esprit, a great deal of monies, who beg, by gar, to have de honour to drow himself at your feet.

Sir Geo. Well, well, baron.

Sir Will. She aska your name; as soon as I tell her, aha, by gar, dans an instant, she melt like de lomp of sugar: she run to her bureau, and, in de minute, return wid de paper.

Sir Geo. Give it me. [*Reads.*

Les preliminaries d'une traite entre le chevalier Wealthy, and la signor Diamenti.

A bagatelle, a trifle: she shall have it.

Load. Hark'e, knight, what is all that there outlandish stuff?

Sir Geo. Read, read! The eloquence of angels, my dear baron!

Load. Slam me, but the man's mad! I don't understand their gibberish—— What is it in English?

Sir Geo. The preliminaries of a subsidy treaty, between Sir G. Wealthy, and Signora Florenza. That the said signora will resign the possession of her person to the said Sir George, on the payment of three hundred guineas monthly, for equipage, table, domestics, dress, dogs, and diamonds; her debts to be duly discharged, and a note advanced of five hundred by way of entrance.

Load. Zounds, what a cormorant! She must be devilish handsome.

Sir Geo. I am told so.

Load. Told so! Why, did you never see her?

Sir Geo. No; and possibly never may, but from my box at the opera.

Load. Hey-day! Why what the devil—

Sir Geo. Ha, ha, you stare, I don't wonder at it. This is an elegant refinement, unknown to the gross voluptuaries of this part of the world. This is, Mr. Loader, what may be called a debt to your dignity: for an opera girl is as essential a piece of equipage for a man of fashion, as his coach.

Load. The devil!

Sir Geo. 'Tis for the vulgar only to enjoy what they possess: the distinction of ranks and conditions are, to have hounds, and never hunt; cooks, and

dine at taverns; houses, you never inhabit; mistresses, you never enjoy——

Load. And debts, you never pay. Egad, I am not surprized at it; if this be your trade, no wonder that you want money for necessaries, when you give such a damn'd deal for nothing at all.

Enter Servant.

Serv. Mrs. Cole, to wait upon your honour.

Sir Geo. My dear baron, run, dispatch my affair, conclude my treaty, and thank her for the very reasonable conditions.

Sir Will. I sall.

Sir Geo. Mr. Loader, shall I trouble you to introduce the lady? She is, I think, your acquaintance.

Load. Who, old Moll? Ay, ay, she's your market-woman. I would not give six-pence for your signoras. One armful of good, wholesome British beauty, is worth a ship-load of their trapsing, tawdry trollops. But hark'e, baron, how much for the table? Why she must have a devilish large family, or a monstrous stomach.

Sir Will. Ay, ay, dere, is her moder, la complaisante to walk in de Park, and to go to de play; two broders, deaux valets, dree Spanish lap-dogs, and de monkey.

Load. Strip me, if I would set five shillings against the whole gang. May my partner renounce with the game in his hand, if I were you, knight, if I would not—— [*Exit* Bar.

Sir Geo. But the lady waits.—[*Exit* Load.]—A strange fellow this! What a whimsical jargon he talks! Not an idea abstracted from play! To say truth, I am sincerely sick of my acquaintance: But, however, I have the first people in the kingdom to keep me in countenance. Death and the dice level all distinctions.

Enter Mrs. COLE, *supported by* LOADER *and* DICK.

Mrs. Cole. Gently, gently, good Mr. Loader.

Load. Come along, old Moll. Why, you jade, you look as rosy this morning; I must have a smack at your muns. Here, taste her, she is as good as old hock to get you a stomach.

Mrs. Cole. Fye, Mr. Loader, I thought you had forgot me.

Load. I forget you! I would as soon forget what is trumps.

Mrs. Cole. Softly, softly, young man. There, there, mighty well. And how does your honour do? I han't seen your honour, I cann't tell the—Oh! mercy on me, there's a twinge——

Sir Geo. What is the matter, Mrs. Cole?

Mrs. Cole. My old disorder, the rheumatise; I han't been able to get a wink of——Oh la! what, you have been in town these two days?

Sir Geo. Since Wednesday.

Mrs. Cole. And never once called upon old Cole. No, no, I am worn out, thrown by and forgotten, like a tattered garment, as Mr. Squintum says. Oh, he

is a dear man! But for him I had been a lost sheep; never known the comforts of the new birth; no.—There's your old friend, Kitty Carrot, at home still. What, shall we see you this evening? I have kept the green room for you ever since I heard you were in town.

Load. What shall we take a snap at old Moll's.—Hey, beldam, have you a good batch of burgundy abroach?

Mrs. Cole. Bright as a ruby; and for flavour! You know the colonel—He and Jenny Cummins drank three flasks, hand to fist, last night.

Load. What, and bilk thee of thy share?

Mrs. Cole. Ah, don't mention it, Mr. Loader. No, that's all over with me. The time has been, when I could have earned thirty shillings a day by my own drinking, and the next morning was neither sick nor sorry: But now, O laud, a thimbleful turns me topsy-turvy.

Load. Poor old girl!

Mrs. Cole. Ay, I have done with these idle vanities; my thoughts are fixed upon a better place. What, I suppose, Mr. Loader, you will be for your old friend the black-ey'd girl from Rosemary-lane. Ha, ha! Well, 'tis a merry little tit. A thousand pities she's such a reprobate!——But she'll mend; her time is not come: all shall have their call, as Mr. Squintum says, sooner or later; regeneration is not the work of a day. No, no, no,—Oh!

Sir Geo. Not worse, I hope.

Mrs. Cole. Rack, rack, gnaw, gnaw, never easy, a-bed or up, all's one. Pray, honest friend, have you any clary, or mint-water in the house?

Dick. A case of French drams.

Mrs. Cole. Heaven defend me! I would not touch a dram for the world.

Sir Geo. They are but cordials, Mrs. Cole. Fetch them, you blockhead. [*Exit* Dick.

Mrs. Cole. Ay, I am a going; a wasting, and a wasting, Sir George. What will become of the house when I am gone, Heaven knows.——No.——When people are missed, then they are mourned. Sixteen years have I lived in the Garden, comfortably and creditably; and, though I say it, could have got bail any hour of the day: reputable tradesmen, Sir George, neighbours, Mr. Loader knows; no knock-me-down doings in my house. A set of regular, sedate, sober customers. No rioters. Sixteen did I say—Ay, eighteen years I have paid scot and lot in the parish of St. Paul's, and during the whole time nobody have said, Mrs. Cole, why do you so? Unless twice that I was before Sir Thomas De Val, and three times in the round-house.

Sir Geo. Nay, don't weep, Mrs. Cole.

Load. May I lose deal, with an honour at bottom, if old Moll does not bring tears into my eyes.

Mrs. Cole. However, it is a comfort after all, to think one has pass'd through the world with credit and character. Ay, a good name, as Mr. Squintum says, is better than a gallipot of ointment.

Enter DICK, *with a Dram.*

Load. Come, haste, Dick, haste; sorrow is dry. Here, Moll, shall I fill thee a bumper?

Mrs. Cole. Hold, hold, Mr. Loader! Heaven help you, I could as soon swallow the Thames. Only a sip, to keep the gout out of my stomach.

Load. Why then, here's to thee.—Levant me, but it is supernaculum.—Speak when you have enough.

Mrs. Cole. I won't trouble you for the glass; my hands do so tremble and shake, I shall but spill the good creature.

Load. Well pulled. But now to business. Pr'ythee, Moll, did not I see a tight young wench in a linen gown knock at your door this morning?

Mrs. Cole. Ay; a young thing from the country.

Load. Could we not get a peep at her this evening?

Mrs. Cole. Impossible! She is engaged to Sir Timothy Totter. I have taken earnest for her these three months.

Load. Pho, what signifies such a fellow as that! Tip him an old trader, and give her to the knight.

Mrs. Cole. Tip him an old trader!—Mercy on us, where do you expect to go when you die, Mr. Loader?

Load. Crop me, but this Squintum has turned her brains.

Sir Geo. Nay, Mr. Loader, I think the gentleman has wrought a most happy reformation.

Mrs. Cole. Oh, it was a wonderful work. There

had I been tossing in a sea of sin, without rudder or compass. And had not the good gentleman piloted me into the harbour of grace, I must have struck against the rocks of reprobation, and have been quite swallowed up in the whirlpool of despair. He was the precious instrument of my spiritual sprinkling.—But however, Sir George, if your mind be set upon a young country thing, to-morrow night I believe I can furnish you.

Load. As how?

Mrs. Cole. I have advertised this morning in the register-office for servants under seventeen; and ten to one but I light on something that will do.

Load. Pillory me, but it has a face.

Mrs. Cole. Truly, consistently with my conscience, I would do any thing for your honour.

Sir Geo. Right, Mrs. Cole, never lose sight of that monitor. But pray how long has this heavenly change been wrought in you?

Mrs. Cole. Ever since my last visitation of the gout. Upon my first fit, seven years ago, I began to have my doubts and my waverings; but I was lost in a labyrinth, and nobody to shew me the road. One time I thought of dying a Roman, which is truly a comfortable communion enough for one of us: but it would not do.

Sir Geo. Why not?

Mrs. Cole. I went one summer over to Boulogne to repent; and, would you believe it, the bare-footed, bald-pate beggars would not give me absolution with-

out I quitted my business——Did you ever hear of such a set of scabby———Besides, I could not bear their barbarity. Would you believe it, Mr. Loader, they lock up for their lives, in a nunnery, the prettiest, sweetest, tender, young things!——Oh, six of them, for a season, would finish my business here, and then I should have nothing to do but to think of hereafter.

Load. Brand me, what a country!

Sir Geo. Oh, scandalous!

Mrs. Cole. O no, it would not do. So, in my last illness, I was wished to Mr. Squintum, who stept in with his saving grace, got me with the new birth, and I became as you see, regenerate, and another creature.

Enter DICK.

Dick. Mr. Transfer, sir, has sent to know if your honour be at home.

Sir Geo. Mrs. Cole, I am mortified to part with you. But business, you know——

Mrs. Cole. True, Sir George, Mr. Loader, your arm——Gently, oh, oh!

Sir Geo. Would you take another thimbleful, Mrs. Cole?

Mrs. Cole. Not a drop———I shall see you this evening?

Sir Geo. Depend upon me.

Mrs. Cole. To-morrow I hope to suit you——We are to have at the tabernacle an occasional hymn,

with a thanksgiving sermon for my recovery. After which, I shall call at the register-office, and see what goods my advertisement has brought in.

Sir Geo. Extremely obliged to you, Mrs. Cole.

Mrs. Cole. Or if that should not do, I have a tid bit at home will suit your stomach. Never brushed by a beard. Well, Heaven bless you—Softly, have a care, Mr. Loader——Richard, you may as well give me the bottle into the chair, for fear I should be taken ill on the road. Gently——so, so!

[*Exit Mrs.* Cole *and* Loader.

Sir Geo. Dick, shew Mr. Transfer in. [*Exit* Dick.] ——Ha, ha, what a hodge podge! How the jade has jumbled together the carnal and the spiritual; with what ease she reconciles her new birth to her old calling!——No wonder these preachers have plenty of proselytes, whilst they have the address so comfortably to blend the hitherto jarring interests of the two worlds.

Enter LOADER.

Load. Well, knight, I have housed her; but they want you within, sir.

Sir Geo. I'll go to them immediately.

[*Exeunt severally.*

ACT II. SCENE I.

Enter DICK, *introducing* TRANSFER.

Dick.

MY master will come to you presently.

Enter Sir GEORGE.

Sir Geo. Mr. Transfer, your servant.

Trans. Your honour's very humble. I thought to have found Mr. Loader here.

Sir Geo. He will return immediately. Well, Mr. Transfer——but take a chair—you have had a long walk. Mr. Loader, I presume, opened to you the urgency of my business.

Trans. Ay, ay, the general cry, money, money! I don't know, for my part, where all the money is flown to. Formerly a note, with a tolerable endorsement, was as current as cash. If your uncle Richard now would join in this security———

Sir Geo. Impossible.

Trans. Ay, like enough. I wish you were of age.

Sir Geo. So do I. But as that will be considered in the premium.——

Trans. True, true,——I see you understand business——And what sum does your honour lack at present?

Sir Geo. Lack!——How much have you brought?

Trans. Who, I? Dear me! none.

Sir Geo. Zounds, none!

Trans. Lack-a-day, none to be had, I think. All the morning have I been upon the hunt. There, Ephraim Barebones, the tallow-chandler, in Thames-street, used to be a never-failing chap; not a guinea to be got there. Then I tottered away to Nebuchadnezzar Zebulon in the Old Jewry, but it happened to be Saturday; and they never touch on the sabbath, you know.

Sir Geo. Why what the devil can I do?

Trans. Good me, I did not know your honour had been so pressed.

Sir Geo. My honour pressed! Yes, my honour is not only pressed, but ruined, unless I can raise money to redeem it. That blockhead Loader, to depend upon this old doating———

Trans. Well, well, now I declare I am quite sorry to see your honour in such a taking.

Sir Geo. Damn your sorrow.

Trans. But come, don't be cast down: though money is not to be had, money's worth may, and that's the same thing.

Sir Geo. How, dear Transfer?

Trans Why I have at my warehouse in the city, ten casks of whale-blubber, a large cargo of Dantzic dowlas, with a curious sortment of Birmingham hafts, and Witney blankets for exportation.

Sir Geo. Hey!

Trans. And stay, stay, then, again, at my country-house, the bottom of Gray's-inn-lane, there's a

hundred ton of fine old hay, only damaged a little last winter for want of thatching; with forty load of flint stones.

Sir Geo. Well.

Trans. Your honour may have all these for a reasonable profit, and convert them into cash.

Sir Geo. Blubber and blankets! Why, you old rascal, do you banter me?

Trans. Who I? O law, marry, Heaven forbid.

Sir Geo. Get out of my—you stuttering scoundrel.

Trans. If your honour would but hear me——

Sir Geo. Troop, I say, unless you have a mind to go a shorter way than you came. [*Exit* Trans.] And yet there is something so uncommonly ridiculous in his proposal, that were my mind more at ease——

Enter LOADER.

So, sir, you have recommended me to a fine fellow.

Load. What's the matter?

Sir Geo. He cannot supply me with a shilling! and wants, besides, to make me a dealer in dowlas.

Load. Ay, and a very good commodity too. People that are upon ways and means, must not be nice, knight.——A pretty piece of work you have made here!——Thrown up the cards, with the game in your hands.

Sir Geo. Why, pr'ythee, of what use would his——

Load. Use! of every use. Procure you the spankers, my boy. I have a broker, that, in a twinkling, shall take off your bargain.

Sir Geo. Indeed!

Load. Indeed!——Ay, indeed.——You sit down to hazard and not know the chances! I'll call him back. ——Halloo, Transfer.——A pretty little, busy, bustling———You may travel miles, before you will meet with his match. If there is one pound in the city, he will get it. He creeps like a ferret into their bags, and makes the yellow boys bolt again.

Enter TRANSFER.

Come hither, little Tranfer; what, man, our Minor was a little too hasty; he did not understand trap: knows nothing of the game, my dear.

Trans. What I said was to serve Sir George; as he seemed———

Load. I told him so; well, well, we will take thy commodities, were they as many more. But try, pr'ythee, if thou couldst not procure us some of the ready for present spending.

Trans. Let me consider.

Load. Ay, do, come: shuffle thy brains; never fear the baronet. To let a lord of lands want shiners; 'tis a shame.

Trans. I do recollect, in this quarter of the town, an old friend, that used to do things in this way.

Load. Who?

Trans. Statute, the scrivener.

Load. Slam me, but he has nicked the chance.

Trans. A hard man, master Loader!

Sir Geo. No matter.

Trans. His demands are exorbitant.

Sir Geo. That is no fault of ours.

Load. Well said, knight!

Trans. But to save time, I had better mention his terms.

Load. Unnecessary.

Trans. Five per cent. legal interest.

Sir Geo. He shall have it.

Trans. Ten, the premium.

Sir Geo. No more words.

Trans. Then, as you are not of age, five more for insuring your life.

Load. We will give it.

Trans. As for what he will demand for the risque—

Sir Geo. He shall be satisfied.

Trans. You pay the attorney.

Sir Geo. Amply, amply; Loader, dispatch him.

Load. There, there, little Transfer; now every thing is settled. All things shall be complied with, reasonable or unreasonable. What, our principal is a man of honour. [*Exit* Trans.] Hey, my knight, this is doing business. This pinch is a sure card.

Re-enter TRANSFER.

Trans. I had forgot one thing. I am not the principal; you pay the brokerage.

Load. Ay, ay; and a handsome present into the bargain, never fear.

Trans. Enough, enough.

Load. Hark'e, Transfer, we'll take the Birmingham hafts and Witney wares.

Trans. They shall be forthcoming.——You would not have the hay with the flints?

Load. Every pebble of 'em. The magistrates of the baronet's borough are infirm and gouty. He shall deal them as new pavement. [*Exit* Trans.] So, that's settled. I believe, knight, I can lend you a helping hand as to the last article. I know some traders that will truck: fellows with finery, not commodities of such clumsy conveyance as old Transfer's.

Sir Geo. You are obliging.

Load. I'll do it, boy; and get you into the bargain, a bonny auctioneer, that shall dispose of them all in a crack. [*Exit.*

Enter DICK.

Dick. Your uncle, sir, has been waiting some time.

Sir Geo. He comes in a lucky hour. Shew him in. [*Exit* Dick.] Now for a lecture. My situation sha'n't sink my spirits, however.——Here comes the musty trader, running over with remonstrances. I must banter the cit.

Enter RICHARD WEALTHY.

R. Weal. So, sir, what, I suppose, this is a spice of your foreign breeding, to let your uncle kick his heels in your hall, whilst your presence chamber is crowded with pimps, bawds, and gamesters.

Sir Geo. Oh, a proof of my respect, dear nuncle.—Would it have been decent now, nuncle, to have introduced you into such company?

R. Weal. Wonderfully considerate!—Well, young man, and what do you think will be the end of all this? Here I have received by the last mail, a quire of your draughts from abroad. I see you are determined our neighbours should taste of your magnificence.

Sir Geo. Yes, I think I did some credit to my country.

R. Weal. And how are these to be paid?

Sir Geo. That I submit to you, dear nuncle.

R. Weal. From me!——Not a souse to keep you from the counter.

Sir Geo. Why then let the scoundrels stay. It is their duty. I have other demands, debts of honour, which must be discharged.

R. Weal. Here's a diabolical distinction! Here's a prostitution of words!——Honour!——'Sdeath, that a rascal, who has picked your pocket, shall have his crime gilded with the most sacred distinction, and his plunder punctually paid, whilst the industrious mechanic, who ministers to your very wants, shall have his debt delayed, and his demand treated as insolent.

Sir Geo. Oh! a truce to this thread-bare trumpery, dear nuncle.

R. Weal. I confess my folly; but make yourself easy; you won't be troubled with many more of my

visits. I own I was weak enough to design a short expostulation with you; but as we in the city know the true value of time, I shall take care not to squander away any more of it upon you.

Sir Geo. A prudent resolution.

R. Weal. One commission, however, I cannot dispense with myself from executing.——It was agreed between your father and me, that as he had but one son, and I one daughter———

Sir Geo. Your gettings should be added to his estate, and my cousin Margery and I squat down together in the comfortable state of matrimony.

R. Weal. Puppy! Such was our intention. Now his last will claims this contract.

Sir Geo. Dispatch, dear nuncle.

R. Weal. Why then, in a word, see me here demand the execution.

Sir Geo. What d'ye mean?——For me to marry Margery?

R. Weal. I do.

Sir Geo. What, moi-me?

R. Weal. You, you——Your answer, ay or no?

Sir Geo. Why then, concisely and briefly, without evasion, equivocation, or further circumlocution, ———No.

R. Weal. I am glad of it.

Sir Geo. So am I.

R. Weal. But pray, if it would not be too great a favour, what objections can you have to my daughter?

Not that I want to remove 'em, but merely out of curiosity——What objections?

Sir Geo. None. I neither know her, have seen her, enquired after her, or ever intend it.

R. Weal. What, perhaps, I am the stumbling block?

Sir Geo. You have hit it.

R. Weal. Ay, now we come to the point. Well, and pray———

Sir Geo. Why, it is not so much a dislike to your person, though that is exceptionable enough, but your profession, dear nuncle, is an insuperable obstacle.

R. Weal. Good lack!—And what harm has that done, pray?

Sir Geo. Done!——So stained, polluted, and tainted the whole mass of your blood, thrown such a blot on your 'scutcheon, as ten regular successions can hardly efface.

R. Weal. The deuce!

Sir Geo. And could you now, consistently with your duty as a faithful guardian, recommend my union with the daughter of a trader?

R. Weal. Why, indeed, I ask pardon; I am afraid I did not weigh the matter as maturely as I ought.

Sir Geo. Oh, a horrid, barbarous scheme!

R. Weal. But then I thought her having the honour to partake of the same flesh and blood with yourself, might prove in some measure, a kind of fullers-

earth, to scour out the dirty spots contracted by commerce.

Sir Geo. Impossible!

R. Weal. Besides, here it has been the practice even of peers.

Sir Geo. Don't mention the unnatural intercourse! Thank Heaven, Mr. Richard Wealthy, my education has been in another country, where I have been too well instructed in the value of nobility, to think of intermixing it with the offspring of a Bourgois. Why, what apology could I make to my children, for giving them such a mother?

R. Weal. I did not think of that. Then I must despair, I am afraid.

Sir Geo. I can afford but little hopes.——Though, upon recollection——Is the Grisette pretty!

R. Weal. A parent may be partial. She is thought so.

Sir Geo. Ah la jolie petite Bourgoise!——Poor girl, I sincerely pity her. And I suppose, to procure her emersion from the mercantile mud, no consideration would be spared.

R. Weal. Why, to be sure, for such an honour, one would strain a point.

Sir Geo. Why then, not totally to destroy your hopes, I do recollect an edict in favour of Britanny; that when a man of distinction engages in commerce his nobility is suffered to sleep.

R. Weal. Indeed!

Sir Geo. And upon his quitting the contagious connexion, he is permitted to resume his rank.

R. Weal. That's fortunate.

Sir Geo. So, nuncle Richard, if you will sell out of the stocks, shut up your counting house, and quit St. Mary Ax for Grosvenor-Square———

R. Weal. What then?

Sir Geo. Why, when your rank has had time to rouse itself, for I think your nobility, nuncle, has had a pretty long nap, if the girl's person is pleasing, and the purchase-money is adequate to the honour, I may in time be prevailed upon to restore her to the right of her family.

R. Weal. Amazing condescension!

Sir Geo. Good-nature is my foible. But, upon my soul, I would not have gone so far for any body else.

R. Weal. I can contain no longer. Hear me, spendthrift, prodigal, do you know, that in ten days your whole revenue won't purchase you a feather to adorn your empty head?———

Sir Geo. Heyday, what's the matter now?

R. Weal. And that you derive every acre of your boasted patrimony from your great uncle, a soapboiler!

Sir Geo. Infamous aspersion!

R. Weal. It was his bags, the fruits of his honest industry, that preserved your lazy, beggarly nobility. His wealth repaired your tottering hall, from the ruins of which, even the rats had run.

Sir Geo. Better our name had perished! Insupportable! soap-boiling, uncle!

R. Weal. Traduce a trader in a country of commerce! It is treason against the community; and, for your punishment, I would have you restored to the sordid condition from whence we drew you, and like your predecessors, the Picts, stript, painted, and fed upon hips, haws, and blackberries.

Sir Geo. A truce, dear haberdasher.

R. Weal. One pleasure I have, that to this gaol you are upon the gallop; but have a care, the sword hangs but by a thread. When next we meet, know me for the master of your fate. [*Exit.*

Sir Geo. Insolent mechanic! But that his Bourgois blood would have soil'd my sword———

Enter Sir WILLIAM, *and* LOADER.

Sir Will. What is de matter?

Sir Geo. A fellow, here, upon the credit of a little affinity, has dared to upbraid me with being sprung from a soap-boiler.

Sir Will. Vat, you from the boiler of soap!

Sir Geo Me.

Sir Will. Aha, begar, dat is anoder ting.——And harka you, mister monsieur, ha——how dare a you have d affrontary———

Sir Geo. How!

Sir Will. De impertinence to sit down, play wid me?

Sir Geo. What is this?

Sir Will. A beggarly Bourgois vis-a-vis, a baron of twenty descents.

Load. But baron———

Sir Will. Bygar, I am almost ashamed to win of such a low, dirty——Give me my monies, and let me never see your face.

Load. Why, but baron, you mistake this thing, I know the old buck this fellow prates about.

Sir Will. May be.

Load. Pigeon me, as true a gentleman as the grand signior. He was, indeed, a good-natured, obliging, friendly fellow; and being a great judge of soap, tar, and train-oil, he used to have it home to his house, and sell it to his acquaintance for ready money, to serve them.

Sir Will. Was dat all?

Load. Upon my honour.

Sir Will. Oh, dat, dat is anoder ting. Bygar I was afraid he was negotiant.

Load. Nothing like it.

Enter DICK.

Dick. A gentleman to enquire for Mr. Loader.

Load. I come—A pretty son of a bitch, this baron! pimps for the man, picks his pocket, and then wants to kick him out of company, because his uncle was an oilman. [*Exit.*

Sir Will. I beg pardon, chevalier, I was mistake.

Sir Geo. Oh, don't mention it! had the slam been fact, your behaviour was natural enough.

Enter LOADER.

Load. Mr. Smirk, the auctioneer.

Sir Geo. Shew him in, by all means. [*Exit* Load.

Sir Will. You have affair.

Sir Geo. If you'll walk into the next room, they will be finished in five minutes.

Enter LOADER, *with* SHIFT *as* SMIRK.

Load. Here, master Smirk, this is the gentleman. Hark'e, knight, did I not tell you, old Moll was your mark? Here she has brought a pretty piece of man's meat already; as sweet as a nosegay, and as ripe as a cherry, you rogue. Dispatch him, mean time we'll manage the girl. [*Exit.*

Smirk. You are the principal.

Sir Geo. Even so. I have, Mr. Smirk, some things of a considerable value, which I want to dispose of immediately.

Smirk. You have?

Sir Geo. Could you assist me?

Smirk. Doubtless.

Sir Geo. But directly?

Smirk. We have an auction at twelve. I'll add your cargo to the catalogue.

Sir Geo. Can that be done?

Smirk. Every day's practice: it is for the credit of the sale. Last week, amongst the valuable effects of a gentleman, going abroad, I sold a choice collection of china, with a curious service of plate; though the

real party was never master of above two delft dishes, and a dozen of pewter, in all his life.

Sir Geo. Very artificial. But this must be concealed.

Smirk. Buried here. Oh, many an aigrette and solitaire have I sold, to discharge a lady's play-debt. But then we must know the parties; otherwise it might be knock'd down to the husband himself. Ha, ha——Hey ho!

Sir Geo. True. Upon my word, your profession requires parts.

Smirk. No body's more. Did you ever hear, Sir George, what first brought me into the business?

Sir Geo. Never.

Smirk. Quite an accident, as I may say. You must have known my predecessor, Mr. Prig, the greatest man in the world, in his way, ay, or that ever was, or ever will be; quite a jewel of a man; he would touch you up a lot; there was no resisting him. He would force you to bid, whether you would or no. I shall never see his equal.

Sir Geo. You are modest, Mr. Smirk.

Smirk. No, no, but his shadow. Far be it from me, to vie with great men. But as I was saying, my predecessor, Mr. Prig, was to have a sale as it might be on a Saturday. On Friday at noon, I shall never forget the day, he was suddenly seized with a violent cholic. He sent for me to his bed-side, squeezed me by the hand; Dear Smirk, said he, what an accident! You know what is to-morrow; the

greatest shew this season; prints, pictures, bronzes, butterflies, medals, and minionettes; all the world will be there; Lady Dy Joss, Mrs. Nankyn, the Dutchess of Dupe, and every body at all: You see my state, it will be impossible for me to mount. What can I do?—It was not for me, you know, to advise that great man.

Sir Geo. No, no.

Smirk. At last looking wishfully at me, Smirk, says he, d'you love me?—Mr. Prig, can you doubt it?—I'll put it to the test, says he; supply my place, to-morrow.—I, eager to shew my love, rashly and rapidly replied, I will.

Sir Geo. That was bold.

Smirk. Absolute madness. But I had gone too far to recede. Then the point was, to prepare for the awful occasion. The first want that occurred to me, was a wig; but this was too material an article to depend on my own judgment. I resolved to consult my friends. I told them the affair——You hear, gentlemen, what has happened; Mr. Prig, one of the greatest men in his way, the world ever saw, or ever will, quite a jewel of a man, taken with a violent fit of the cholic; to-morrow, the greatest shew this season; prints, pictures, bronzes, butterflies, medals, and minionettes; every body in the world to be there; Lady Dy Joss, Mrs. Nankyn, Dutchess of Dupe, and all mankind; it being impossible he should mount, I have consented to sell——They stared—it is true, gentlemen. Now I should be glad to have your opinions

as to a wig. They were divided: some recommended a tye, others a bag: one mentioned a bob, but was soon over-ruled. Now, for my part, I own, I rather inclined to the bag; but to avoid the imputation of rashness, I resolved to take Mrs. Smirk's judgment, my wife, a dear good woman, fine in figure, high in taste, a superior genius, and knows old china like a Nabob.

Sir Geo. What was her decision?

Smirk. I told her the case—My dear, you know what has happened. My good friend, Mr. Prig, the greatest man in the world, in his way, that ever was, or ever will be, quite a jewel of a man, a violent fit of the cholic———the greatest shew this season, to-morrow, pictures, and every thing in the world; all the world will be there: now, as it is impossible he should, I mount in his stead. You know the importance of a wig: I have asked my friends—some recommended a tye, others a bag—what is your opinion? Why, to deal freely, Mr. Smirk, says she, a tye for your round, regular, smiling face would be rather too formal, and a bag too boyish, deficient in dignity for the solemn occasion; were I worthy to advise, you should wear a something between both. I'll be hanged, if you don't mean a major. I jumped at the hint, and a major it was.

Sir Geo. So, that was fixt.

Smirk. Finally. But next day, when I came to mount the rostrum, then was the trial. My limbs shook, and my tongue trembled. The first lot was a chamber-

utensil, in Chelsea china, of the pea-green pattern. It occasioned a great laugh; but I got through it. Her grace, indeed, gave me great encouragement. I overheard her whisper to Lady Dy, Upon my word, Mr. Smirk does it very well. Very well, indeed, Mr. Smirk, addressing herself to me. I made an acknowledging bow to her grace, as in duty bound. But one flower flounced involuntarily from me that day, as I may say. I remember, Dr. Trifle called it enthusiastic, and pronounced it a presage of my future greatness.

Sir Geo. What was that?

Smirk. Why, sir, the lot was a Guido; a single figure, a marvellous fine performance; well preserved, and highly finished. It stuck at five and forty: I, charmed with the picture, and piqued at the people, A going for five and forty, no body more than five and forty?——Pray, ladies and gentlemen, look at this piece, quite flesh and blood, and only wants a touch from the torch of Prometheus, to start from the canvass and fall a bidding. A general plaudit ensued, I bowed, and in three minutes knocked it down at sixty-three, ten.

Sir Geo. That was a stroke at least equal to your master.

Smirk. O dear me! You did not know the great man, alike in every thing. He had as much to say upon a ribbon as a Raphael. His manner was inimitably fine. I remember they took him off at the play-house, some time ago; pleasant, but wrong. Public

characters should not be sported with—They are sacred.——But we lose time.

Sir Geo. Oh, in the lobby on the table, you will find the particulars.

Smirk. We shall see you, there will be a world of company. I shall please you. But the great nicety of our art is, the eye. Mark how mine skims round the room. Some bidders are shy, and only advance with a nod; but I nail them. One, two, three, four, five. You will be surprised—Ha, ha, ha!—Heigh ho! [*Exit.*

ACT III. SCENE I.

Enter Sir GEORGE, *and* LOADER.

Sir George.

A MOST infernal run. Let's see, [*Pulls out a card.*] Loader a thousand, the baron two, Tally——Enough to beggar a banker. Every shilling of Transfer's supply exhausted! nor will even the sale of my moveables prove sufficient to discharge my debts. Death and the devil! In what a complication of calamities has a few days plunged me! And no resource!

Load. Knight, here's old Moll come to wait on you; she has brought the tid-bit I spoke of. Shall I bid her send her in?

Sir Geo. Pray do. [*Exit* Loader.

Enter Mrs. COLE, *and* LUCY.

Mrs. Cole. Come along, Lucy. You bashful baggage, I thought I had silenced your scruples. Don't you remember what Mr. Squintum said? A woman's not worth saving, that won't be guilty of a swinging sin; for then they have matter to repent upon. Here, your honour, I leave her to your management. She is young, tender, and timid; does not know what is for her own good: but your honour will soon teach her. I would willingly stay, but I must not lose the lecture. [*Exit.*

Sir Geo. Upon my credit, a fine figure! Awkward ——Cann't produce her publicly as mine; but she will do for private amusement—Will you be seated, miss?——Dumb! quite a picture! she too wants a touch of the Promethean torch—Will you be so kind, ma'am, to walk from your frame and take a chair? ——Come, pr'ythee, why so coy? Nay, I am not very adroit in the custom of this country. I suppose I must conduct you——Come, miss.

Lucy. O, sir.

Sir Geo. Child!

Lucy. If you have any humanity, spare me.

Sir Geo. In tears! what can this mean? Artifice. A project to raise the price, I suppose. Look'e, my dear, you may save this piece of pathetic for another occasion. It won't do with me; I am no novice—— So, child, a truce to your tragedy, I beg.

Lucy. Indeed you wrong me, sir; indeed you do.

Sir Geo. Wrong you! how came you here, and for what purpose?

Lucy. A shameful one. I know it all, and yet believe me, sir, I am innocent.

Sir Geo. Oh, I don't question that. Your pious patroness is a proof of your innocence.

Lucy. What can I say to gain your credit? And yet, sir, strong as appearances are against me, by all that's holy, you see me here, a poor distrest involuntary victim.

Sir Geo. Her stile's above the common class; her tears are real.—Rise, child.—How the poor creature trembles!

Lucy. Say then I am safe.

Sir Geo. Fear nothing.

Lucy. May heaven reward you. I cannot.

Sir Geo. Pr'ythee, child, collect yourself, and help me to unravel this mystery. You came hither willingly? There was no force?

Lucy. None.

Sir Geo. You know Mrs. Cole.

Lucy. Too well.

Sir Geo. How came you then to trust her?

Lucy. Mine, sir is a tedious, melancholy tale.

Sir Geo. And artless too?

Lucy. As innocence.

Sir Geo. Give it me.

Lucy. It will tire you.

Sir Geo. Not if it be true. Be just, and you will find me generous.

Lucy. On that, sir, I relied in venturing hither.

Sir Geo. You did me justice. Trust me with all your story. If you deserve, depend upon my protection.

Lucy. Some months ago, sir, I was considered as the joint heiress of a respectable wealthy merchant; dear to my friends, happy in my prospects, and my father's favourite.

Sir Geo. His name.

Lucy. There you must pardon me. Unkind and cruel though he has been to me, let me discharge the duty of a daughter, suffer in silence, nor bring reproach on him who gave me being.

Sir Geo. I applaud your piety.

Lucy. At this happy period, my father, judging an addition of wealth must bring an increase of happiness, resolved to unite me with a man sordid in his mind, brutal in his manners, and riches his only recommendation. My refusal of this ill-suited match, though mildly given, enflamed my father's temper, naturally choleric, alienated his affections, and banished me his house, distrest and destitute.

Sir Geo. Would no friend receive you?

Lucy. Alas, how few are friends to the unfortunate! Besides, I knew, sir, such a step would be considered by my father as an appeal from his justice. I therefore retired to a remote corner of the town, trusting, as my only advocate, to the tender calls of nature in his cool reflecting hours.

Sir Geo. How came you to know this woman?

Lucy. Accident placed me in a house, the mistress of which professed the same principles with my infamous conductress. There, as enthusiasm is the child of melancholy, I caught the infection. A constant attendance on their assemblies procured me the acquaintance of this woman, whose extraordinary zeal and devotion first drew my attention and confidence. I trusted her with my story, and in return, received the warmest invitation to take the protection of her house. This I unfortunately accepted.

Sir Geo. Unfortunately indeed!

Lucy. By the decency of appearances, I was some time imposed upon. But an accident, which you will excuse my repeating, revealed all the horror of my situation. I will not trouble you with a recital of all the arts used to seduce me: happily they hitherto have failed. But this morning I was acquainted with my destiny; and no other election left me, but immediate compliance or a jail. In this desperate condition, you cannot wonder, sir, at my choosing rather to rely on the generosity of a gentleman, than the humanity of a creature insensible to pity, and void of every virtue.

Sir Geo. The event shall justify your choice. You have my faith and honour for your security. For though I cannot boast of my own goodness, yet I have an honest feeling for afflicted virtue; and, however unfashionable, a spirit that dares afford it protection. Give me your hand. As soon as I have dispatched some pressing business here, I will lodge

you in an asylum, sacred to the distresses of your sex; where indigent beauty is guarded from temptations, and deluded innocence rescued from infamy.

[*Exeunt.*

Enter SHIFT.

Shift. Zooks, I have toiled like a horse; quite tired, by Jupiter. And what shall I get for my pains? The old fellow here talks of making me easy for life. Easy! And what does he mean by easy? He'll make me an exciseman, I suppose; and so with an ink-horn at my button-hole, and a taper switch in my hand, I shall run about gauging of beer-barrels. No, that will never do. This lad here is no fool. Foppish, indeed. He does not want parts, no, nor principles neither. I overheard his scene with the girl. I think I may trust him. I have a great mind to venture it. It is a shame to have him duped by this old don. It must not be, I'll in and unfold—— Ha!—Egad, I have a thought too, which, if my heir apparent can execute, I shall still lie concealed, and perhaps be rewarded on both sides.

I have it,—'tis engender'd, piping hot,
And now, Sir Knight, I'll match you with a plot.

[Exit.

Enter Sir WILLIAM, *and* RICHARD WEALTHY.

R. Weal. Well, I suppose by this time you are satisfied what a scoundrel you have brought into the world, and are ready to finish your foolery.

Sir Will. Got to the catastrophe, good brother.

R. Weal. Let us have it over then.

Sir Will. I have already alarmed all his tradesmen. I suppose we shall soon have him here, with a legion of bailiffs and constables.——Oh, you have my will about you?

R. Weal. Yes, yes.

Sir Will. It is almost time to produce it, or read him the clause that relates to his rejecting your daughter. That will do his business. But they come. I must return to my character.

Enter SHIFT.

Shift. Sir, sir, we are all in the wrong box; our scheme is blown up; your son has detected Loader and Tally, and is playing the very devil within.

Sir Will. Oh, the bunglers!

Shift. Now for it, youngster.

Enter Sir GEORGE, *driving in* LOADER *and another.*

Sir Geo. Rascals, robbers, that, like the locust, mark the road you have taken, by the ruin and desolation you leave behind you.

Load. Sir George!

Sir Geo. And can youth, however cautious, be guarded against such deep-laid, complicated villany? Where are the rest of your diabolical crew? your auctioneer, usurer, and——O sir, are you here?—— I am glad you have not escaped us, however.

Sir Will. What de devil is de matter?

Sir Geo. Your birth, which I believe an imposition, preserves you, however, from the discipline those rogues have received. A baron, a nobleman, a sharper! O shame! It is enough to banish all confidence from the world. On whose faith can we rely, when those, whose honour is held as sacred as an oath, unmindful of their dignity, descend to rival pick-pockets in their infamous arts. What are these [*Pulls out dice.*] pretty implements? The fruits of your leisure hours! They are dexterously done. You have a fine mechanical turn.——Dick, secure the door.

Mrs. COLE, *speaking as entering.*

Mrs. Cole. Here I am, at last. Well, and how is your honour, and the little gentlewoman?——Bless me! what is the matter here?

Sir Geo. I am, madam, treating your friends with a cold collation, and you are opportunely come for your share. The little gentlewoman is safe, and in much better hands than you designed her. Abominable hypocrite! who, tottering under the load of irreverent age and infamous diseases, inflexibly proceed in the practice of every vice, impiously prostituting the most sacred institutions to the most infernal purposes.

Mrs. Cole. I hope your honour——

Sir Geo. Take her away. As you have been singular in your penitence, you ought to be distinguished

in your penance; which, I promise you, shall be most publicly and plentifully bestowed.

[*Exit Mrs.* Cole.

Enter DICK.

Dick. The constables, sir.

Sir Geo. Let them come in, that I may consign these gentlemen to their care. [*To Sir* Will.] Your letters of nobility you will produce in a court of justice. Though, if I read you right, you are one of those indigent, itinerant nobles of your own creation, which our reputation for hospitality draws hither in shoals, to the shame of our understanding, the impairing of our fortunes, and, when you are trusted, the betraying of our designs. Officers, do your duty.

Sir Will. Why, don't you know me?

Sir Geo. Just as I guessed. An impostor. He has recovered the free use of his tongue already.

Sir Will. Nay, but George.

Sir Geo. Insolent familiarity! away with him.

Sir Will. Hold, hold a moment. Brother Richard, set this matter to rights.

R. Weal. Don't you know him?

Sir Geo. Know him! The very question is an affront.

R. Weal. Nay, I don't wonder at it. 'Tis your father, you fool.

Sir Geo. My father! Impossible!

Sir Will. That may be, but 'tis true.

Sir Geo. My father alive! Thus let me greet the blessing.

Sir Will. Alive! Ay, and I believe I sha'n't be in a hurry to die again.

Sir Geo. But, dear sir, the report of your death—and this disguise——to what———

Sir Will. Don't ask any questions. Your uncle will tell you all. For my part, I am sick of the scheme.

R. Weal. I told you what would come of your politics.

Sir Will. You did so. But if it had not been for those clumsy scoundrels, the plot was as good a plot ——O, George! such discoveries I have to make.—Within I'll unravel the whole.

Sir Geo. Perhaps, sir, I may match 'em.

Shift. Sir. [*Pulls him by the sleeve.*

Sir Geo. Never fear. It is impossible, gentlemen, to determine your fate, till this matter is more fully explained; till when, keep 'em in safe custody.——Do you know them, sir?

Sir Will. Yes, but that's more than they did me. I can cancel your debts there, and, I believe, prevail on those gentlemen to refund too——But you have been a sad profligate young dog, George.

Sir Geo. I cann't boast of my goodness, sir, but I think I could produce you a proof, that I am not so totally destitute of———

Sir Will. Ay! Why then pr'ythee do.

Sir Geo. I have, sir, this day, resisted a temptation,

that greater pretenders to morality might have yielded to.——But I will trust myself no longer, and must crave your interposition and protection.

Sir Will. To what?

Sir Geo. I will attend you with the explanation in an instant. [*Exit.*

Sir Will. Pr'ythee, Shift, what does he mean?

Shift. I believe I can guess.

Sir Will. Let us have it.

Shift. I suppose the affair I overheard just now, a prodigious fine elegant girl, faith, that, discarded by her family for refusing to marry her grandfather, fell into the hands of the venerable lady you saw, who being the kind caterer for your son's amusements, brought her hither for a purpose obvious enough.—But the young gentleman, touched with her story, truth, and tears, was converted from the spoiler of her honour to the protector of her innocence.

Sir Will. Look'e there, brother, did not I tell you that George was not so bad at the bottom!

R. Weal. This does indeed atone for half the——But they are here.

Enter Sir GEORGE *and* LUCY.

Sir Geo. Fear nothing, madam, you may safely rely on the——

Lucy. My father!

R. Weal. Lucy!

Lucy. O, sir, can you forgive your poor distrest unhappy girl? You scarce can guess how hardly I've

to be a good plotter. All this was brought to bear by my means.

Shift. With my assistance, I hope you'll own, sir.

Sir Will. That's true, honest Shift, and thou shalt be richly rewarded; nay, George shall be your friend too. This Shift is an ingenious fellow, let me tell you, son.

Sir Geo. I am no stranger to his abilities, sir. But, if you please, we will retire. The various struggles of this fair sufferer require the soothing softness of a sister's love. And now, sir, I hope your fears for me are over; for had I not this motive to restrain my follies, yet I now know the town too well to be ever its bubble, and will take care to preserve, at least,

Some more estate, and principles, and wit,
Than brokers, bawds, and gamesters shall think fit.

SHIFT *addressing himself to Sir* GEORGE.

And what becomes of your poor servant Shift?
Your father talks of lending me a lift——
A great man's promise, when his turn is serv'd!
Capons on promises wou'd soon be starv'd:
No, on myself alone, I'll now rely:
'Gad I've a thriving traffic in my eye——
Near the mad mansions of Moorfields I'll bawl;
Friends, fathers, mothers, sisters, sons, and all,
Shut up your shops, and listen to my call.
With labour, toil, all second means dispense,
And live a rent-charge upon Providence.